



Reopening Info

Dear St. Rose family,

As you know, St. Rose is gradually reopening and increasing the numbers of participants for the Sunday celebration of the Mass as well as easing some regulations imposed by local and Church authorities in the active fight to stop the spread of this very infectious-life-threatening disease.

During those horrifying days of COVID-19, hand washing, face covering and social distancing the world was on edge. In fact, we all saw first hand how fear can lead to selfishness and frenzy (*and a shortage of toilet paper*). In spite of those difficult circumstances, our Staff members and clergy kept working in generous and creative ways to serve St. Rose of Lima the best way possible. Our parishioners also kept generously sustaining our Church's ministries and mission.

As a matter of fact, St. Rose of Lima has been able to provide in our own parking lot free food for the needy as well as free COVID-19 testing and vaccinations for many members of our church and local community. Because of the pandemic, we also learned new ways of being among one another, pray together, help others, form our children in faith at home, be physically and sacramentally present to the sick and the dying at home and in our local hospitals, offer the Sacraments of Initiation to our RCIA community, give the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion to our youth and children, counsel many stressed by the lockdown's mental, physical, financial and social consequences, pray for the suffering and the dying, offer funerals and burial services for the dead, give spiritual consolation and human support to their family members and friends and also celebrate the Eucharist daily via YouTube.

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1).

So begins the account of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the early Church in the Book of Acts of the Apostles. As a sign of God's love, it was on the day of Pentecost that we at St. Rose were also able to sing and celebrate the Holy Mass in greater numbers ***“all together in one place”*** this year since the pandemic began. While some restrictions are being lifted, the ongoing threat of the Covid-19 global pandemic abroad and at home will still require that we return to church and faith

activities in a way that is respectful, measured and mindful of the needs of the most vulnerable among us. While some have already begun to attend public worship in person, we know that some still need to continue to worship at home for some time.

As our St. Rose of Lima family begins to resume public activities, please know that we will continue to do so through a careful process of discussion and discernment, with an abundance of caution and concern for those who are most vulnerable, upon consideration of the best scientific knowledge at our disposal and in the spirit of constant prayer and humility.

As we start to see light, let us be faithful to God and to one another through the challenges of this time in the life of our families, Church and world. Let us be guided by the Word, responsive to the Spirit and open to the grace of God in silent prayer and the Eucharist. **Let us remember that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus but ourselves, only if we freely choose to do so.**

No doubt that in the near future there will be wonderful surprises, great celebrations and moments of deep satisfaction. We will get to see glimpses of the plan God has for each one of us. Very soon, we will have even greater opportunities to savor the spiritual gifts of love, joy, forgiveness, peace, generosity and faithfulness.

Let me finish this communication by remembering this wonderful blessing from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians,

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”
(Philippians 4:4-7).

May the peace of God and the love of our Blessed Mother Mary dwell richly in your hearts, homes, places of work and neighborhoods now and forever. **Always remember that the Lord awaits you in the Holy Mass and in the reception of Holy Communion both daily and every Sunday.**

Fr. Agustín Mateo Ayala
Pastor

Fr. Oscar Astigarraga
Associate Pastor