

May 24, 2020

Dear Parishioners of St. Thérèse of Lisieux,

“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you,” says the Lord, “plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.”
Jeremiah 29:11.

During this continued time of uncertainty, we keep our eyes and our hearts fixed firstly on Our Risen Lord who gives us a future of hope even in the midst of darkness and illness. And this hope finds its most perfect experience in the Sacrifice of the Mass. I know that we have all missed the opportunity to gather publicly to join in the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass, but prudence has dictated our course thus far.

Bishop Stika has, however, recently issued a new Decree for the diocese that allows us to resume public Masses on the weekend of May 30-31. But we are aware that when we do return, we will be experiencing the Mass in a new manner. This letter is attempting to summarize some of the new changes required by the Bishop’s Decree and its implementation at St. Thérèse.

Am I obligated to attend Mass at this time? NO. Please keep in mind as you read this letter that, until further notice, Bishop Stika has dispensed (removed) the obligation to attend Mass and, therefore, those who are vulnerable or just not comfortable going to a public Mass should continue to participate in the live-streamed Masses offered by St. Thérèse. You are encouraged to continue to make an act of “spiritual Communion.”

Church services are a high-risk event at this time. You should consult the Bishop’s Decree, the information from the State health officials, and the CDC recommendations when deciding if you should resume coming to Mass. If you have traveled outside of the country, currently have, or recently have had a fever, or been exposed to someone with COVID-19, please do not attend Mass at this time. Per CDC’s guidelines, if you are over 65, have underlying health conditions, or are the primary caretaker for someone in the high-risk category, the recommendations are you do not attend at this time.

Beginning tomorrow, Memorial Day May 25th, we will resume Public Mass while at the same time continuing to live-stream our services.

Our Mass schedule will continue Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday @ 8:30 a.m. Wednesday's Mass will be at 5:30 p.m.

Next weekend, Saturday May 30th and Sunday May 31st, our Pentecost Mass schedule will be Saturday Vigil @ 6:00 p.m. Sunday morning @ 8:00 a.m. in Spanish, *10:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon in English.

* Please note that our 9:30 a.m. Mass time is shifted to 10:00 a.m. to allow time to disinfect our church.

NEW PRECEDURE HIGHLIGHTS:

All parishioners must wear a mask. Please bring your own mask. If you forget yours, the parish has a small number of masks to give out.

Under new guidelines, seating is greatly reduced. Please take this under consideration when planning on which Mass to attend and make sure to arrive at least 15 minutes early.

Once capacity is reached, the doors are to be locked and those still arriving will be directed to our over-flow seating in our gym where the Mass will be live-streamed and Holy Communion will be brought to you

Per Bishop Stika's instructions, "Individual parishioner singing is discouraged as it is thought to be an activity that expels significantly more aerosolized droplets of the virus." Thus, there will be no congregational singing. We will have an accompanist and a cantor.

Collection baskets will be placed near the altar and at the back of church near the inner doors. Please place any contributions directly in the basket, as there will not be a collection at the regular time. We also encourage you to look into donating through . . .

WeShare: <https://sttheresecatholicchurch.weshareonline.org/> .

Please do not hold hands during the Our Father.

For the time being, we will eliminate the Sign of Peace.

FOR HOLY COMMUNION:

Per Bishop Stika's Decree, "Reception of the Host on the tongue is strictly prohibited at this time, and the distribution of the Chalice is suspended. If you do not feel that you can receive Holy Communion on the hand, you are encouraged to make a Spiritual Act of Communion.

Ushers will invite you forward to Communion row by row. Once you leave your pew, please remain in a single file line maintaining six feet of distance between households.

Just before you reach the minister, you will sanitize your hands at the station provided. You will receive Holy Communion in your hand, and after responding, "Amen," you will step to the side, lift your mask, and consume the Host before returning to your seat.

When Mass is completed, we ask that you dismiss while maintaining social distance and head straight to your cars. Please do not congregate near the exits. The priests or deacons will not be available immediately before or after Mass, in order to ease the entrance and exit of parishioners.

We at St. Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Church thank you for your continued support of the parish during this unusual time. Your prayers and contributions have enabled us to continue to help our parishioners and community during this time of need. We also want to thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we implement these changes so as to best protect the health and safety of our parish family. These procedures may need to be amended as time goes forward and as experience informs us. Please continue to pray for the Parish as we continue to pray for you.

Sincerely in Christ,
Fr. Mike Nolan