



# Saint Mary – Stony Hill

*Founded in 1847*

May 28, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Peace and all good. I write to you with some important updates following the most recent directives of our bishop concerning the COVID pandemic and parish life.

- Beginning with the 4 p.m. Vigil of the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) on **June 5**, Catholics in the dioceses of New Jersey are once again obligated to participate in Mass in person on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. As has always been the Church's teaching, *this obligation does not apply to persons who are ill or confined to their home, a hospital or a nursing facility; nor does the obligation currently apply to those who have serious anxiety and concerns about returning to church at the present time or reason to believe that they were recently exposed to the coronavirus or another serious or contagious illness.* (The full text of the NJ Bishops' statement can be found on the parish website.)
- Daily Mass will continue to be live-streamed. Beginning with the weekend of June 5-6, only the Saturday 4 p.m. Vigil Mass will be live-streamed on the weekend. This Mass will be immediately posted on the parish website for parishioners to view anytime on the weekend.
- **Beginning today**, you are no longer required to wear a mask when in church. All pews *may* be opened for general seating, but at St. Mary's pews on the extreme right and left in the church and some rear pews will socially distanced.
- The invitation to share the Sign of Peace will continue to be part of the Mass, but you are reminded that there is no prescribed way of doing this. It is not necessary, then, to shake hands, although immediate family members may choose to do this.
- The current practice of distributing Holy Communion only in the form of consecrated hosts will continue.
- The church will continue to be professionally cleaned after all Masses at the present time.
- In light of the numbers of people for whom the Mass obligation will not apply and who are not in the Watchung area for much of the summer, the current Mass schedule (Sat., 4 p.m.; Sunday, 7:30 and 11:15 a.m.) will remain in place through the Labor Day weekend.

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Finally, I ask those of you who regularly worship with us daily and weekly via live-streaming to kindly be patient as we struggle with technical difficulties that have lately been plaguing us. We are in the process of looking into better and more dependable ways of bringing the Mass to you.

My prayers for a safe and enjoyable Memorial Day weekend, and let us not forget the men and women in our military—and well as our police, firefighters and other first responders—who put their lives on the line for us daily.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Msgr.", written in a cursive style.

Rev. Msgr. William Benwell  
Pastor