

Sunday, May 24, 2020 - The Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ

Dear Parishioners,

Fr. Alex and I were very pleased about the attendance of our first Drive-in Mass last Sunday. It was wonderful to see so many parishioners and some friends who had driven a distance to be with us. Although we were not able to distribute Holy Communion, we were honored to be able to bless everybody with the Blessed Sacrament as they left the parking lot. A big thanks to Mike, Tom, Vinnie and Rhonda who worked so hard to set up everything! Thanks also to our musicians Dan, and his son Quinn, and Lenny. To our lectors, ushers and Deacon Ray, thank you! We plan to have Drive-in Masses this Sunday at 10 and 12 noon. I received an email from the bishop this morning for when we are allowed to open the church for private worship and private Mass. We had a great staff meeting last week and are well stocked with all the sanitizing equipment and supplies necessary to keep everybody safe. Our church will be allowed to hold 25% of the full seating capacity and individuals will be seated at 6 feet distance from each other. Families and couples will, of course, sit together. It will be necessary for everybody including staff to wear a mask in the church and when we are allowed to reopen, we will explain the necessary procedures. Sadly, singing will not be allowed but we will certainly all joyfully gather together, listen to the Word of God and finally, receive Holy Communion. As soon as the Governor gives his permission, we will send you a Flock Note message and be happy to welcome you home to our beloved St. Luke church.

In the meantime, I will continue to hear confessions from the end of the parking lot in my car. When confession resumes in the church, we are asked not to use the confessional room but will use the chapel, again keeping social distance.

Every year for the feast of Corpus Christi, (this year, June 14) every parish in our diocese is invited to bring non-perishable foods to our local Catholic Charity food pantries. This year, because of the virus, we are asked to go online and to order items that will be delivered directly to the organization. I would invite you as individuals and as a family, to go online to <https://yougivegoods.com/stluke> and order food donations starting at \$17.00 and know that this generous act we undertake will help the working poor during this even more difficult time for them.

I am happy to say that the Catholic Charities bins in our diocese have now been reopened. You will notice our Catholic Charity bin, which sits at the very end of the parking lot, is open and ready for use again.

As we gather together on this Ascension Thursday (to be celebrated this Sunday), we celebrate Jesus Christ's ascension back into heaven. We know that he will return again at the end of time in glory. On this Ascension Day, let us each contemplate how I am using my gift. How I am spreading the word of God and how I am being charitable to those in need?

It is hard to believe that this Monday is Memorial Day. It will be a very strange with most people not travelling to the shore. However, I am sure that many families will take the opportunity to have barbeques and celebrate together our great nation. Let's give thanks this weekend for all the members of all the Armed Forces, those who have died to protect our rights and to protect poor nations, those who continue to serve abroad and protect many minorities throughout the world.

On behalf of Fr. Alex, I wish you a Happy Memorial Day. God Bless America!

Fr. Owen