

From Fr. Dan, Pastor, 5/20/20

Dear Friends:

WE ARE THRILLED AND DELIGHTED TO REOPEN for public Masses on the weekend of Pentecost (how fitting!), May 30 & 31. (We wish we could have opened this weekend – May 23 & 24, but it was not even remotely possible to get all the safety measures in place by that time.)

WEEKEND MASSES: The TEMPORARY Mass Schedule we will start with on May 30 & 31 and continue with on June 6 & 7 is:

Saturday: 4pm @ Our Lady's

Sunday: 9am @ Sacred Heart, 10am @ Our Lady's, 11am @ Sacred Heart (ASL)

On the weekend of June 13 & 14, we will add on to this the 6pm @ Our Lady's. This is a part of our plan to work incrementally toward expanding in the direction of the pre-COVID Mass schedule. The huge number of tasks involved in doing this safely during this once-in-a-century deadly pandemic is the reason we are doing this so carefully and incrementally. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

FUNERAL MASSES: They resume on Monday, June 1, and - again TEMPORARILY - we can only do one a day in a church due to the need to clean between Masses.

WEEKDAY MASSES: They resume Monday, June 8. With the transfer of Fr. Kevin, we regret we are not able to do two weekday Masses a day; we wish we could. So it will be necessary for us to do what have done in the past summers on a year-round basis. (If we should get someone to follow Fr. Kevin, we can reexamine this.) The weekday Mass schedule will be:

Monday, Friday, and Saturday 9am @ Sacred Heart

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 7am @ Our Lady's

CONFESSIONS: We have yet to set a regular hour. This is TEMPORARY: they will be from 2pm-3pm @ Our Lady's. The Archdiocese wisely mandates that the priest be free a long time before Mass to attend to safety concerns during this COVID time.

WHO SHOULD COME TO MASS? The dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation will continue for the foreseeable future. Cardinal Sean strongly encourages people in vulnerable populations, especially the elderly and those with complicating physical conditions, to continue to worship virtually from home. I find this question helpful: "Would my doctor want me to worship from home or at church?" If you are unsure about the answer, may I suggest she would be happy to get a call from you with that question. Please be safe! In the long run, we can attend more Masses if we make safety an extremely high priority during this time where deadly COVID-19 is all over the place.

MASKS AND HAND SANITIZER: Please come with your own mask; they are required for all those over age 5 who do not have a medical condition that precludes a mask. Please also bring your own hand sanitizer so you can use it frequently while at

Mass. While we will have some hand sanitizer at the entrances to the churches, given the scarcity of supplies, we request you help make it last by bringing your own, and also because it will key to have your own in the pew with you.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND LIMITED SEATING: For safety, we can only seat as many people as can be kept 6 feet apart. The church will be marked to ensure your safety and fellow parishioners, and staff will graciously guide you.

THE VIRTUAL MASS will be continuing as usual since the pandemic began, and it will go at least until the virus is totally gone, and maybe even continue after that. Those of you not able to be at Mass in person are especially important to us. By 8am on Sundays, we send out an email like this with a link you can click on. At a similar time, you can also find our Mass on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/SHOLVideos>.

WE ARE SO HAPPY TO BE REOPENING. We are grateful to God and to all of you. Special thanks to our staff and the many volunteers who are doing the heavy lifting that make a safe reopening possible.

Love & God Bless You!

Fr. Dan

Special Request for Volunteers

Dear Friends,

Thank you for all have been doing for Sacred Heart and Our Lady's. You make such a difference. I am writing to ask you to consider giving crucial and much needed help in furthering God's work in our two parishes by volunteering to be a member of the people assisting with the very many tasks that go with holding public Masses during the pandemic. We really need the help of a lot of people! You can do this by emailing:

At Sacred Heart: Nick Frega at nfrega@sholnewton.org

At Our Lady's: Kate Neal at kneal@sholnewton.org

In addition, you may be contacted to request your help in this way. I am especially grateful for your willingness in this challenging time to being open to doing a ministry other than your usual one – temporarily – due to the special needs our parishes have.

Please keep safety front and center. I strongly encourage you, especially if you are at risk due to age or a medical condition, to limit your involvement to what is safe for you. You might ask yourself: "If my doctor knew I was doing this, would he or she approve?" For some, that may mean connecting by phone, internet or mail, instead of face to face, at this time.

With much love, gratitude and prayers,

Fr. Dan