



St. Raphael Catholic Parish

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April 26, 2020

Dear Parishioners of St. Raphael's, Queen of Angels, Holy Family, and St. Albert's,

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, we have missed gathering together as faith communities to celebrate Mass and receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. Based on the directives and guidelines of Governor Bullock, Bishop Warfel, and Valley County health authorities, we have carefully and thoughtfully devised the following plans to allow people to safely gather again in churches to celebrate Mass as well other liturgies and services. Our goal is to provide a safe and prayerful environment for those who choose to come into the churches to worship and pray. Please be aware that these plans may change as the authorities continue to monitor the virus situation on a daily basis.

Following is a summary of the guidelines listed in the Bishop's letter of April 23, 2020 and how those guidelines will be implemented in St. Raphael Parish:

1. The obligation to attend Mass continues to be suspended.
2. If you are sick, or if you live with someone who is sick, please stay home.
3. People with underlying health conditions are recommended to stay home until restrictions are lifted.
4. Beginning on the weekend of May 2nd & 3rd, Mass will be celebrated – with reduced seating capacity – at St. Raphael church at 6pm on Saturdays and 9am on Sundays. The 9am Sunday Mass will be live streamed via Facebook Live (we're working to fix the accessibility issue for those who don't have a Facebook account).
5. Mass will be offered at Holy Family on May 17 at 11:30am, Queen of Angels on May 24 at 11am, and St. Albert's on June 14 at 4pm. Masses at the mission churches will continue on the regular schedule going forward.
6. Weekday Masses will be offered at St. Raphael church on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 12:10pm, beginning on May 13. Because there will be fewer people at the weekday Masses than at the weekend Masses, it is our hope that our parishioners who are health-compromised and most vulnerable will feel more comfortable attending on the weekdays.
7. Social/physical distancing must be maintained at all times during Masses and other liturgies. To accomplish this, the following practices have been adopted:
 - A. Greeters and Ushers will assist parishioners to ensure that proper distancing is observed as parishioners arrive and enter the church building.
 - a. If we reach our seating capacity before you arrive, we suggest you return to your vehicle and watch the Mass via the live stream until Communion, at which time you can come into the church to receive communion, and then return to your vehicle to watch the rest of Mass.
 - B. Greeters and Ushers will be wearing cloth face coverings. Parishioners are also encouraged to wear cloth face coverings.
 - C. Ushers will show parishioners to designated pews. Some pews will be "taped off" and unavailable for seating in order to allow for proper distancing.
 - D. Family members from the same household do not need to distance themselves from each other, but should practice safe distancing from other parishioners.

- E. Disposable worship aids will be provided. Please feel free to take them home. (Hymnals and Missalettes have been removed from the pews because they are very difficult to disinfect and sanitize.)
- F. Collection baskets will not be passed from person to person. Baskets will be placed at the entrances to the church. You may leave your gifts in the basket when you are coming into church, or as you leave church.
- G. No Sign of Peace will be exchanged.
- H. Gifts will not be processed to the altar. The bread and wine will be presented from the Credence Table.
- I. Deacon Ed will assist at Mass, and no other acolytes will be utilized at this time.
- J. During Communion:
 - a. No Precious Blood will be offered/shared.
 - b. Per CDC guidelines and the Bishop's directive, Communion will be offered in the hand only.
 - c. The Communion line will be single file and Ushers will direct parishioners to leave their pews at designated times. Proper distancing marks have been taped to the carpet to provide a visual aid for spacing.
 - d. After receiving the Body of Christ, parishioners will all turn to the left and return to their pews. Those seated on the right-hand side of the church will need to go all the way around and enter the pew from the outside aisle. (This will allow for adequate spacing from the pianist during the Communion procession.)
- 8. Ushers will assist parishioners in leaving the church after Mass, to allow for adequate distancing.
- 9. Proper cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces must be done after each Mass or service.
 - A. Hand sanitizer will be available at each entrance to the church. Please use it when you arrive, and when you leave.
 - B. We need a few volunteers to stay and help clean and disinfect surfaces after Mass. Supplies will be provided.
- 8. Other liturgies and services: (All must adhere to the physical distancing rules and cleaning/sanitizing regulations)
 - A. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest must follow all directives described above
 - B. The Rosary will be prayed before the weekend Masses
 - C. The Rosary and Adoration (with Benediction) will be prayed on Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm
 - D. Thursday morning Adoration continues to be suspended until further notice
 - E. Small groups may resume meeting
 - F. Confirmation/1st Communion will be scheduled within the next few months (Fr. Jose is working on it)
 - G. Graduation Mass is still in the planning stages, more information will be available soon
 - H. Weddings and funerals may be held with reduced attendance and adherence to the guidelines in the Bishop's letter.
 - I. The Parish Office is open Monday – Thursday, 10am – 4pm. Please call 228-9800 with any questions.

Abundant peace,
Fr. Jose, Pastor