

God Alone!

June 5, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is with a grateful heart that I received the bishop's letter this week making holy Mass available to the public. Although it has been a blessing to be able to live-stream the sacred Liturgy, it does not replace your personal presence at Mass when we are gathered together as one to worship the Lord and to be nourished and strengthened by the Lord's Eucharistic sacrifice. I look forward to being reunited with you!

We will begin with the celebration of daily Mass on Wednesday, June 10th and resume the regular full weekend schedule of Masses on June 13th and 14th, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Attached to this letter, you will find the Diocesan guidelines which must be in place, in order for parishes to re-open and begin the public celebration of Mass. I would ask that out of the abundance of charity each of us is called to have for one another, that we respect these guidelines to ensure that everyone feels safe and protected as we gather in our Church building for worship.

As we resume the public celebration of the holy Mass, please keep in mind the following important reminders: First, given the ongoing presence of the current health crisis, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays remains lifted. Second, in order to assist those whose health may be vulnerable or who do not yet feel comfortable returning to Church, we will continue to live-stream the Sunday Mass at 10:30AM, the recording of which may be watched later via the parish's YouTube channel. Finally, we would ask anyone to refrain from attending Mass in person, who may fall into the following categories:

- a) A person who has any of the following symptoms of COVID-19:
 - i. Fever (feeling feverish or a documented temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher);
 - ii. Respiratory symptoms such as runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath (other than seasonal allergy symptoms);
 - iii. Whole body symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue;
 - iv. Changes in the person's sense of taste or smell;
- b) A person who has been in close contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days (Note: healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment can attend); or
- c) A person who has travelled in the past 14 days either:
 - i. Internationally (outside the United States)
 - ii. By cruise ship; or
 - iii. Domestically (within the United States) outside of New Hampshire, Vermont, or Maine on public transportation (bus, train, plane, etc).

As we anticipate our reunion around the altar of the Lord, let us offer our thanksgiving to the Father who has given us the most precious gift of the Eucharist. There can be no greater gift than to be united with our sweet Jesus during the Mass as He makes present for us the gift of His sacrifice on the Cross and as He gives Himself to us in Holy Communion to be consumed and to take refuge in our souls. As Saint Mother Theresa once said, *"When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you. When you look at the Sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you NOW."*

In Jesus and Mary,

Fr. Michael

GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS

in the

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

- ✓ Only 40% maximum occupancy is permitted at each Mass at this time. Pews will be marked out to indicate where persons may be seated both in the main Church and in the transept chapel. Additional seating will be available in the area around the baptismal font and in the choir loft.
- ✓ Those who are not able to be accommodated because 40% occupancy has been reached are permitted to attend Mass outside in the plaza in front of the Church. Those already inside the main worship area, might out of charity, give up their seat if one who is needy has been unable to enter.
- ✓ Doors will be propped open to allow people to enter and exit without the need to touch the doors.
- ✓ Charity begins at home and in order to protect other people at church, masks really must be worn by all except children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, anyone incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face-covering without assistance. Priests are directed by the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship never to wear a face covering during the celebration of the Mass. It is to be put on only for distribution of Holy Communion and then removed immediately.
- ✓ Persons must maintain a six-foot distance from others; the only exception to this is families, who are not to be separated and may sit together.
- ✓ The Baptismal Font and Holy Water Fonts will remain empty.
- ✓ The Missalettes will not be available for use. Persons must bring their own missal or worship aid such as the Magnificat to be able to have access to the Readings and prayers for Mass. Digital forms of such worship aids are permissible.
- ✓ The Congregation is asked not to sing due to the increased possibility and spread of contamination.
- ✓ The exchanging of the Sign of Peace continues to be omitted.
- ✓ The procession for reception of Holy Communion will be indicated by signs appropriately spaced on the floor tiles. Please use these as guidelines for distancing when approaching to receive Holy Communion. At this time, only two Communion stations are permitted in the middle aisle.
- ✓ There continues to be no distribution of the Precious Blood.
- ✓ At the end of Mass, it is asked that everyone put the kneeler DOWN at the place where they have been seated for Mass to indicate a specific area to be disinfected to eliminate unnecessary work.
- ✓ Baskets will be placed at the main entrance of the Church in order for persons to place their Sunday offering.