

**MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR, FR. DAVID:  
On the reopening of St. Alexander church**

Today, Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, I would like to inform you about our progress toward celebrating public Masses at St. Alexander Church.

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, Archbishop Alexander Sample approved a plan for the limited reopening of public Masses in the Archdiocese of Portland. Public Masses may resume, on a parish by parish basis, if specific requirements are met. On May 7<sup>th</sup>, Governor Kate Brown announced a plan for gradually reopening businesses and activities in Oregon. Activity may resume, on a county by county basis, if specific requirements are met. Together, the decisions by these two authorities mean that we can work towards the public celebration of Mass.

However, we must consider the specific situation we face in Washington County, in Cornelius and at St. Alexander. Washington County is one of the counties with the most Covid-19 cases in Oregon and hopes to be approved for reopening on June 1. Cornelius is one of the cities with the most Covid-19 cases per capita in the county. And at St. Alexander, we must be aware of the disease's disproportionate effect on the underserved and historically marginalized. This applies to a significant proportion of our community.

Please understand that the safety of all members of our community remains our top priority. I do not believe it is prudent to resume public celebrations at St. Alexander until Washington County begins to reopen. When we do resume public Masses, attendance will be limited based on directives then in place. Our plans and possibilities may change at any time. If someone present at a Mass later tests positive for Covid-19, we may need to close the church for cleaning and I may need to go into quarantine. This would potentially require postponing or cancelling other scheduled celebrations.

When we do begin limited reopening of public Masses, I would like to give priority to our candidates for baptism, confirmation and first communion and to our couples who have prepared for marriage. I ask the rest of the community to recognize this priority in a spirit of gratitude for these candidates. With strict limits still in place for public gatherings, it will simply not be possible for everyone to attend Mass in the first days and weeks that public Masses are celebrated. Please understand this and be patient.

I would love to be celebrating Mass with all of you present once again. I miss seeing you, talking with you, and sharing life with you. These decisions about reopening are not easy. Please know that we are doing the best we can to resume public celebration of Mass as soon as possible.

For more detailed information, please see the frequently asked questions which will be posted on our website next week and updated regularly. We expect to have a more definitive timeline within two weeks. If you have further questions, do not hesitate to call the office.

Finally, please remember the following. Keep six feet of physical distance from each other when in public. Wash your hands frequently. Don't touch your face. Wear face coverings while in public. Be safe, for yourself and for others.

As our Easter season draws to a close, I wish you once again: Happy Easter! He is Risen! Love one another, as the Risen Lord loves you. Know that we are always in God's good hands.

May God bless you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.