

A Note from the Pastor

May 20, 2020

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

It has officially been two months since we have suspended our public Mass at St. Jude. We, as a parish community, have stepped up to the call to stay at home, and we have done our part in stopping, or slowing, the spread of the virus thus far. To the best of our knowledge there have been no cases of the coronavirus among the parishioners of St. Jude. The number of new cases in the overall community may have slowed, but that does not mean that the virus is no longer among us. We must be willing to take every precaution necessary to stop it totally and keep it from spreading any further.

Our bishop, and our insurance provider, have established a number of guidelines which we must adhere to in order to reopen our church. Those guidelines were developed in order to keep each and every one of our parishioners safe. We will be asked to wear social masks throughout the service to help prevent any potential virus from spreading from person to person. You may not feel that you have the virus, but sometimes those who have it show no symptoms. We must always be aware of our neighbor's needs and follow the Golden Rule in our care for them. We ask that you bring your own social mask to wear throughout the service. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided. **We must all wear our masks!**

In accordance with the bishop's desire, we would ask that those families that have individuals with health concerns stay at home as a family until the virus threat has subsided. This includes our beloved parishioners that are 60 and above who have added health concerns such as diabetes, heart issues and respiratory problems. You are to be the judge as to when you feel safe enough to return, knowing that we must always protect the vulnerable from the chance of an infection. We will ask those families with small children, especially those with children who are too young to understand the situation and maintain a safe distance from others, to please stay at home with their family together. It may be difficult to maintain social distancing if your children are running around in the church. We would ask all those who feel they may have been compromised through work, or other activities, to stay at home in self-quarantine. This advice, again, is to protect all other individuals with health concerns. Please note that the dispensation from attending Mass in person has been extended, by the bishop, until the end of June.

For the time being, the distribution of Holy Communion will be in the hand at your place in the pews. Communion on the tongue is not advised, at this time, due to the potential of transmitting germs from one communicant to another. Special instructions will be given to those who have that special devotion, understanding that additional measures will need to be in place for sanitizing between communicants. Any special instructions will be given at the time of communion. We ask that the parish be understanding of each other as we seek out the best way to accommodate all of our parish community.

The success of our parish opening will be based upon our acceptance of and adherence to the guidelines established for our St. Jude community. Please help us by wearing your mask and keeping your social distance accordingly. Please understand our desire to remain healthy in both body and soul.

May God bless you always,

Father David