

May 23, 2021



Dear St. Joseph Parish Family,

May the risen Lord and the Holy Spirit, the paraclete be with you always. As we celebrate the great feast of Pentecost, the day in which the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and inflamed their hearts and souls with the courage to take on their mission as the Church, may we too be filled with the abundant grace of the Spirit to arise from our slumber once again and continue the mission of our Lord here in Manor, Texas.

As you know, this past year has been very hectic and filled with uncertainties. Our parish family, seeking to always protect the health of each other, has worked very diligently to make St. Joseph Catholic Church a comfortable and safe place to worship. I would like to publicly thank Fr. Bradford, my staff, members of the Parish Council, members of the Finance Council and all our parish family, for taking the protocols seriously and remaining faithful to the safety and health of each other. I also would like to thank you all for continuing to be faithful in your weekly gifts to the parish during the heavy part of the pandemic when the parish was shut down.

In today's Gospel reading from John 20:19-23, we hear Jesus commission his disciples and send them to do his work in the world,

***The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."***

We are called to rejoice in the fact that the Lord is always with us and to have a deep, supernatural peace as we leave from our comfort and set out to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ. For this reason, after much discernment and in conversation with members of our Parish Council, physicians in our area and other community leaders; and in union with our Bishop, following his Pastoral Letter dated April 25, 2021. And consulting the guidance of the CDC; and because vaccines against COVID-19 have become widely available, I offer you the following instructions for our Parish Family which will take effect **Saturday, May 29, 2021**.

1. Social distancing will no longer be required in the Church or on the church property.
2. **Following the CDC's directions as of May 13, 2021;** those who are fully vaccinated, will no longer require wearing facemasks in the church. Those who are **not fully**

**vaccinated** will be asked to continue to wear facemasks. (This will be on a trust basis, no one will verify vaccines).

3. We will no longer require for the church to be sanitized after each mass or event.
4. Communion will be distributed on the hand or on the tongue. I ask that all who wish to receive on the tongue do so at the end of the line.
5. All parishioners are strongly encouraged to take the COVID-19 Vaccines when available.
6. If you feel ill, in any way, you are strongly encouraged to stay home. There is no sin incurred when you are ill.

As always, we will keep an eye on the communications of the CDC and leadership of our local area and Diocese.

As we celebrate Pentecost and gather in the upper room (the church), I rejoice in seeing so many more parishioners returning to Mass. It reminds me that we too are people infused with the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. These gifts and fruits help us to trust in Jesus, this has been obvious by the fact that you all continued to support our parish and continuously desired to have union with each other and with Christ. It is great that this pandemic is on the downfall and we pray that it continues to do so.

I am so honored and humbled to be here as your shepherd and I thank you for placing your trust in me, I promise that I will always seek what is best for our parish family. I look forward for all the wonderful work we will do here at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Manor, Texas. Please know that I will always be praying for our parish family.

May the Holy Spirit continue to inflame our hearts and souls and continue the good work that the Lord has begun here in our community.

May God bless you, God Love you, and God Keep you, now and always.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Henry Cuellar Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Fr. Henry Cuellar Jr.  
Administrator / Pastor