

July 21, 2020

Dear St. Clare Parish Family,

I pray and hope that you and your family are safe and well during this challenging time. After meeting for several weeks with my pandemic committee, and after consulting with the pastoral council, we have decided that it is time to open the church again for our sacramental celebrations, beginning August 1st.

The main reason for this move is that the St. Clare school will be opening on August 13th. With the children coming back, the celebration of weekday Mass is better suited in the main sanctuary of the church rather than the narthex, since the main sanctuary is free of distractions. In addition, a lesser but not unimportant factor is that the weather is getting too hot to comfortably continue celebrating Mass outside.

We all need to work together to make this safely happen, so I am going to explain how this will work, step by step. Please take some time and read carefully.

What will we do?

- Public Masses will move into the church building beginning the weekend of August 1-2, 2020.
- Mass times will remain at 4:30 pm on Saturdays, as well as 7:00 am and 9:00 am on Sundays.
- Livestreaming of the Mass will continue only at the 4:30 pm and 9:00 am Masses.
- There will be no music at the 7:00 am Mass.
- In addition to sitting inside the church, you may also sit outside for Mass in the narthex, and overflow seating will be in the parish hall once we've reached 25% capacity in the church (which is still mandated by the Cardinal).
- You may also park your car in the Red Zone (which will now be on the *south* side of the church, near Parkwood Way) and watch the livestream and/or listen to Mass on outdoor speakers. Holy Communion will be brought to your car.
- Confessions will remain in the narthex on Thursdays, 6:00 – 7:00 pm.
- The church will be open for private prayer on weekdays, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.
- Despite opening the church for Mass and private prayer, groups or meetings in the church are still not permitted at this time.

How will we do it?

- All of the same safety protocols will need to be followed. This means:
 - wearing a mask—covering BOTH your mouth AND your nose—which is required for everyone except babies
 - maintaining six-foot distancing between parties outside of your family
 - sanitizing your hands before receiving Holy Communion
 - preventing children from running/playing in the narthex
 - staying home if you are sick (or think you might be sick)

- staying home if you are in a high-risk category (See also: <https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/07/10/fauci-everything-we-know-about-covid-19-so-far/>)
- The obligation to attend Sunday Mass is still dispensed, so please discern wisely what you will do, considering both your safety and the safety of your fellow parishioners. You may still watch the livestream Mass from home on weekends and during the week, and ask God for the grace of Spiritual Communion.
- Please give yourself plenty of time and arrive early enough to be directed where to sit in the church:
 - Seating will be indicated by color-coded markings on every other pew, depending on the size of your party.
 - A seating map will be posted online and on the outside gate, so you can see the seating options.
- When the time comes for Holy Communion, please remain in your seat, and the minister will come to you.
- After Mass, we ask that you exit promptly and continue to respect six-foot distancing.

What is the procedure for private prayer in the church?

- You are encouraged to take advantage of the open church during the week to spend time in prayer with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.
- The church building will be open for private prayer Monday through Friday, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.
- For your own safety and the safety of others, visitors must first stop by the front desk to sign in.
- You will be given a slip of paper that says, “I prayed here,” which you should leave on the pew where you sat when you leave.
 - This paper will tell others where you sat, so they know not to sit there.
 - It will also tell us where we need to clean.
- There will be a designated area in the front of the church where you can pray.
- Please don't sit where someone already sat!
- Remain at least six feet away from others.
- You must wear a mask (over both your mouth and nose).
- When you leave, go back to the front desk to sign out.

Can I buy candles?

- If you would like to purchase a votive candle, please come to the parish office during regular office hours (Monday through Friday, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm).
- If you would like to take the candle into the church and place it in a candle holder, you will need to sign in and follow the same procedure as indicated above (for private prayer in the church).

I want to personally thank each and every one of you for your patience and continued support during this trying time. God has not abandoned us! May we all continue to pray for one another, and for an end to the pandemic.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and stay connected!

Peace in Christ,
Fr. Vincent