

June 22, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Sacred Heart And St. Michael's Parish,

I pray that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy during this most challenging time. Know that you have been close in my prayer during the daily Masses all these days. We have also been praying for the sick, those who have been called home to the Lord and our front-line health care and essential workers.

You may have heard that soon we will be able to re-open our church once again. Many of the churches in the diocese have already been re-opened last weekend. And many other churches will be re-opened during the coming weeks. We are thankful as this time of closure has been painful and difficult. As we implement our re-opening plans, we must do so with prudence and caution, ensuring that we do everything possible to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

As you can expect, things will look a little different when we return to church. For that reason, I'm including a few documents to help us understand what things will look like. Yes, these are uncomfortable practices and they may seem overly restrictive – I understand that. However, to prevent us from having to close once again and to keep everyone as safe as possible, we must all do our part and make the best of this challenging situation.

One of the biggest challenges is that, to re-open, we must do so in phases where our capacity (number of people who can attend church) will be limited to directives from the Province of Ontario's medical experts. Please refer to the attached document on how our parish will do our best to tackle this issue. The document also includes our current schedule and office hours.

I am also attaching a guidelines document to give you a better sense of what you can expect and how you can help out before you arrive at church, when you arrive and at points in between. We'll offer reminders/signs when you are here but it's good to review these guidelines at this time.

One key point that I would like to highlight is that the diocese, after consulting with the Chief Medical Officer for the Province of Ontario, is asking that all those (over the age of 8) who come to church wear a mask/face covering to mitigate the potential spread of the virus. While not mandatory, they are highly recommended. Again, I recognize this is uncomfortable but it is out of care and love for our neighbor. Finally I invite you to consider how you might share your time and talents as a volunteer. The many tasks required for re-opening are significant and we need more volunteers than ever to help. If you'd like to volunteer, please contact the parish office at 519 875 4438 or email at sacredheartlangton@dol.ca Our joy of re-opening churches is measured with the restrictions that will be required. However, returning to sacramental life and gathering as a community is sustenance essential for our faith community during these trying days.

I look forward to welcoming you back soon – be assured that you remain in my prayers each day.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Thomas C. Kuriacko
Pastor.