

We have good news. We are ready for the first phase of bringing the availability of the sacraments back. Bishop Brennan has announced that we can start offering confession, by appointment, in a very specific manner that will be outlined below. He did however want it to be clearly communicated that what the Vatican had clarified remains in force. That is, if someone is not able to get to confession they can still receive the forgiveness of their sins by repenting, making an act of Love for God above all things, and making a resolve to go to confession once one is able to again. He wants this clear: anyone who is in the at-risk category because of previous conditions or older in age, or for example, if you have a cough or a fever and are worried about possibly being a carrier, are considered to meet the requirement of “not being able to confess at this time.” In other words, just because the Stay-at-Home order is being lifted and confession is “available” doesn’t mean that it is necessarily “available for you” and thus you shouldn’t risk yours or others’ health by coming to confession. You would still be able to receive forgiveness of your sins by doing the above listed things from the Vatican.

In order to maintain social distancing and to avoid having people touching door handles and seats, etc. confession will be offered as follows:

Anyone interested in going to confession in the coming weeks, first offerings beginning this coming Friday, would:

- 1) Call our scheduler, Phyllis Hassey, at 740-774-2299. She has the list of days and times that I will be available for confession. She will then assign you to a 5-minute slot. This is not a time for pastoral counseling. You would just confess your sins and then receive penance and absolution. If you would like pastoral counseling you can call me at the office and we can set up a phone call for that later.
- 2) On the day and the time of your appointment, you would arrive at the church and proceed to the parish center. You will notice that the doors are propped open so that you do not need to touch anything. There will be a Knights of Columbus member there to help facilitate. He will show you the spots (marked by an X outside of the parish center) to await your turn. You should NOT show up more than five minutes early for your appointment as we want to avoid a line of people and a crush on social distancing.
- 3) When you are next in line and you see the person come out of the building (or the K of C Member directs you) then you will go up the steps (or elevator if needed – sanitizer will be available if so) and then you will walk into the hall. I will be in the corner near the stage facing away from you. There will be an X marking the spot, six feet from me, where you will stand to make your confession. You are asked to please wear a mask. I will also be wearing a mask. By default then no confessions will be face-to-face. Also, if you are worried about anonymity do know that I will not be seeing the list of who is coming to confession, only Phyllis will have that information.
- 4) Please note you will be asked by Phyllis for your phone number when you call. This is so that if I am experiencing a fever or a cough she can call you to let you know that the confessions have been cancelled as a precaution. In a similar way, if you have a fever or a cough or such the day of your appointment, please cancel it as a precaution. To that

end, please take your temperature before coming and do not come if it is over 100.4 degrees.

- 5) Confession examinations of Conscience will be available from the K of C member, but if you take one, please take it home or discard it in the trashcan in the parking lot when you are finished.

As we begin to phase back in as a society we are going to have to be conscious of a new, and thus at first strange way of doing things. However, we know that these kind of precautions can help us avoid a re-emergence of the virus. On the other hand, if we return to things as normal, it is very likely that we would end up with a new surge, and subsequently a new stay-at-home order. This is the first step in offering sacraments in a COVID-world. The bishops are still discussing how and when to implement a return to public Masses. Hopefully we'll have more information on that soon. In the meantime let us pray for all of the victims of the virus as well as all of those on frontlines in the fight.

In Christ,  
Fr. Hahn