



Dear Friends,

As you are aware, the Governor has given permission for houses of worship to begin services with no more than a 40% seating capacity. That is wonderful news, indeed! While each church will be able to choose which day they will open, *we here at Our Lady of the Lake will begin this weekend, May 23 and 24 on a reduced schedule. For the time being, we will have mass on Saturday at 5:00 pm, Sunday morning at 10:00 am and Sunday evening at 6:00 pm.* We will also be recording the mass as we normally do for the website and Flocknote for the foreseeable future. Beginning Monday, May 25 and going forward we will have daily mass at 8:00 am, Monday through Wednesday. It is important to remember that the Bishop has lifted the requirement for attending Sunday mass through December 31 of this year. Also, the elderly and anyone with health conditions should remain at home and participate at mass on television.

**Our seating ability will be capped at 76 people per mass. This includes the priest, the lector, the cantor and the musician. Once that number has been reached, no one else will be allowed in.** How will we determine who will be able to attend mass? We have established some guidelines for our parish and trust that folks will abide by them. Also, please keep in mind that families who live together do not have to observe the 6 ft. social distancing rule and applies as well to married couples and those who do live in the same house. It does mean that the entire pew cannot be filled at one time unless it is by one single group living under the same roof.

These guidelines are a combination of what we have received from the State and from the Diocese. Remember, these guidelines are to keep everyone safe and to allow our hearts desire to be fulfilled, to be able to receive the Eucharist will be a grace moment for all of us.

#### **Guidelines for Attendance at Worship at Our Lady of the Lake:**

- ❖ When you arrive at the church, only the front doors will be used to enter and exit the church. The doors to the church will only be opened 20 minutes prior to the start of Mass.
- ❖ You will notice that just like the grocery stores, there will be lines six feet apart from each other for social distancing at the entrance to the church.

- ❖ **WEARING A MASK IS MANDATORY. NO ONE WILL BE ADMITTED WITHOUT ONE UNLESS IT IS BECAUSE OF A MEDICAL CONDITION.**
- ❖ Ushers/Greeters will guide you and or your family to the next available seat. Please keep in mind you may not be able to sit in your “usual” spot. Every other pew will remain empty. Hand Sanitizer will be available as you enter and leave the church from the usher/greeter. Please feel free to bring your own, if you like.
- ❖ When it is time to receive the Eucharist, this is where you will notice a significant change in procedure. We will begin from the back of the church with an usher bringing you to the front and then, returning to your seat by the sides. It will be single file only. The usher will give you a squirt of hand sanitizer as you leave your seat.
- ❖ For the reception of the Eucharist: when you come forward, remove your mask. Then with your arms and hands completely stretched out, the priest will place the Eucharist in your hand without touching your hand. You may then place it on your tongue, replace your mask and return to your seat. We will demonstrate that for you when you come to church. Please do not attempt to take the Eucharist from the hand of the priest. The point is to not touch the other person at all. **Receiving the Eucharist on the tongue is highly discouraged as it is extremely possible to pass the virus and other germs to the priest.**
- ❖ After the final blessing, the ushers will guide people out from their seats to the front doors to exit the church.
- ❖ Most unfortunately, there can be no gathering in the church after mass. You will be encouraged to do “social distancing” in the parking lot.

The intention for all the masses this weekend will be for the repose of the souls of all 90,000 people who died thus far from the Covid 19 virus along with the other scheduled intentions. It is a great joy for us to be able to return to mass, however, it has come with great suffering and sorrow for so many people! May our gratitude to Almighty God for our survival thus far always contain a prayer for those who have gone before us.

Please allow me to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to our Staff and volunteers who have made this experience of faith and perseverance a most humbling and gratifying one. As we say, “God is Good, all the time!”

Peace,

Fr. Michael