

ST. James the Greater Parish

Blind River

June 16, 2020

Dear Parishioners!

The decision to close our parish on March 13, 2020, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic was a very difficult one and we recognize the tremendous spiritual sacrifice of the faithful during this time.

You may have heard that soon we will be able to re-open our churches with some modifications and restrictions. Although this time of closure has been painful and difficult, we all recognize the importance of its implementation so as to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

Please note:

The extension of the Bishop's Dispensation from Sunday attendance still exists at this time. If you feel 'unsafe' about attending a communal gathering, you are under no obligation to attend Mass at this time. Certainly, if you are in a high-risk health category, you are advised to remain at home.

As you can expect, things will look a little different when we return to church. This must be done to keep everyone as safe as possible and to prevent us from having to close once again. As such, we will be following the guidelines set out by the Federal, Provincial, and local governments, the directives of the Chief Medical Officer of Ontario, and directives of our Bishop and the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Sault Ste Marie.

30% Restriction:

One of the biggest challenges we will face in our Church is that we are restricted to attendance numbers of 30% of capacity. The church has a capacity of 200 therefore we can seat 60 parishioners at mass. This number will be strictly enforced. Once this limit has been achieved, the doors must be locked. And all parishioners are encouraged to stay safe during mass, if you feel that you don't feel well during mass kindly indicate to the MCs immediately.

Weekday activities:

All weekday masses at the parish site are cancelled. Mass at the Golden Birches is cancelled until further notice. All prayers, adoration, rosaries and school ministries are cancelled until further notice

Before coming to church:

Please check temperatures of all family members before coming to church. If any family member has a fever, please remain home for the health and safety of all. If a fever is detected, please consult your family doctor. And you are exempted from the Sunday obligation mass.

Symptoms:

You will be asked before entry if you or your family members have any of the following flu-like symptoms.

- Cough
- Sputum production
- Shortness of breath
- Undue fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Muscle ache
- Runny nose
- Chills involving shakes
- Loss of sense of taste
- Loss of sense of smell

These questions must be asked of all entering the church.

Travel:

If you have travelled outside Canada within the past 14 days, please do not enter the church until any medically directed self-isolation has been completed.

Masks:

All attendees at Mass **must** wear a mask for the duration of the service (*children under 2 years are exempt*). It is advisable to bring your own mask as these have shown to be more comfortable and durable. A comfortable and familiar mask will promote the practice of '**not touching one's face**', as advised by the medical experts. Further, all are advised not to touch surfaces as much as possible.

Distancing:

Physical distancing must be maintained at all times inside the church even outside in parking lot as well. This includes the 2-meter observance when entering and exiting the building, including the parking lot. Distancing will be maintained by the ushers who will seat families and individuals within the church in **designated**

seating. Further, the reception of Holy Communion will occur at the direction of the ushers.

Disinfecting:

We will be using the main entrance door to enter and to exit only throughout the season of COVID-19 and the side door to the elevator will be used only by those who use the elevator. Please use the **hand sanitizer** made available upon entering the church. To further restrict the spread of contamination, all song books and prayer books have been removed from the church. There will be no Bulletins at this time but we will post on our website: www.northshoreparishes.com, CWL Facebook page and to your emails if you could give us the email. Use of the washrooms will be restricted for emergency use only; an usher will be assigned to open the washroom and will sanitize immediately following its use.

Liturgical Changes:

- no holy water in basin **but the priest will sprinkle holy water on the parishioners at the end of the mass as the choir sings the recessional hymns.**
 - no congregational singing
 - no procession(s), including Offertory procession (collection will occur when entering/leaving Mass)
 - no contact during the Sign of Peace
 - receiving Holy Communion will occur at the direction of the ushers.
 - parishioners who wish to refrain from Holy communion, you are welcome.
 - Holy Communion to be received on the hand only, **not on the tongue**
 - leaving Mass will occur at the direction of the ushers.
- Other changes will also be implemented, and all these will be explained at Mass.
- no gathering as you come out of the church and in the parking lot.

Baptism: allowed after the mass under the provincial and diocesan code of gathering restriction. Pls call Fr. Lourdu.

Funerals: will be celebrated under the provincial and diocesan code of gathering restriction. Pls call Fr. Lourdu.

Reception at the church hall: under the provincial and diocesan code of gathering restriction. Pls call Fr. Lourdu.

Weekend of June 28 opening:

Finally, much planning and many meetings are required to ensure, as best as possible, the safety of all. The Parish Advisory Council, Ushers, Catholic Women's League, Music Ministry, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Parish office staff and Ministers all have areas of responsibility to promote the safe opening of our Parish on the weekend of June 28th. With the focus of all these people, and the cooperation of all, hopefully we may be allowed to keep our Church doors open. Let us continue to pray for the safe return to our community gatherings, for all of our Parish family, and for all people of the world during this time of pandemic.

Although there are many restrictions for what we can't do, there are things we still can do i.e.: we can worship and pray together in faith; we can support one another and reach out to those who are unable to attend. Together we can do much...

I assure you of my prayers and extend on you my blessings on this Fathers day.
God bless dear papas,

**Fr. Lourdu
&
Parish COVID-19 Advisory Team**

For assistance, please call:

- Father Lourdu at 705 356 7591
- Lise Maeck at 705 356 1196
- Bill Boivin at 705 576 2117