

# Sacred Heart Parish, Dexter, Missouri † founded 1889

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD-CAPE GIRARDEAU

Rev. William W. Hennecke, Jr., Pastor † [whennecke@curatordeliberatus.org](mailto:whennecke@curatordeliberatus.org)

Dear beloved faithful of Sacred Heart,

Saturday, May 16, 2020

Greetings in the Easter joy of our risen Lord Jesus Christ! We have all come a long way together during this time, finding new ways to adapt and live, all while holding on to our faith. We and the world have all endured a difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially since the suspension of Mass and other public celebrations of the sacraments in our diocese on March 17. Now our national, state, and local officials are beginning this month to allow for the lifting of certain restrictions. On May 13, Bishop Rice issued certain provisions for returning to Mass beginning on May 18, and the opening weekend of Sunday Masses on May 23-24. The purpose of my letter to you and all households is to assist in making this information known to you.

To state clearly, all of these provisions herein are from Bishop Rice and further, are in keeping with current guidelines given by local health officials of both Dunklin and Stoddard counties. **The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass continues until further notice for ALL, especially the sick and those with compromised health or immune systems.**

Weekday Masses will resume according to their normal schedule on Wednesday, May 20, held inside each parish church. All weekend Masses will resume according to their normal schedule on Saturday, May 23, held outdoors weather permitting, or inside the parish church and its respective parish center. For all Masses, there will be no altar servers, no offertory, no sign of peace, and no distribution of the Precious Blood. Do not park behind parish center. An offertory basket will be available.

During weekday and weekend Mass inside parish churches, there is a 25% occupancy limitation. Overflow crowds are directed to gather in their respective parish center, taking a chair, and watching the livestream Mass. In both the church and parish center, parishioners belonging to the same household are permitted to sit together, otherwise parishioners must maintain six feet of social distancing from one another. Ushers will be available to assist in the seating of parishioners.

During weekend Mass outside, there is no occupancy limit. All parishioners must bring their own outdoor chair for sitting, facing church. Parishioners belonging to the same household are permitted to sit together, otherwise parishioners must maintain six feet of social distancing from one another. Sunglasses, sunscreen, a hat, and an umbrella are recommended.

Everyone is required to bring a mask when going up to receive Holy Communion, otherwise a mask is recommended and optional, but not required to be worn during Mass. As we return to our first few Masses, I will give instructions to everyone at Mass on receiving Holy Communion with the mask. Hand sanitizer will be available to use. All surfaces will be sanitized.

In light of favorable weather this time of year offers, I personally believe that celebrating Mass outdoors is the best option for all of us, since it eliminates the indoor constraints of those gathering to be separated into two different spaces, allowing us all to be together. And mentally due to COVID-19, we will feel safer being outside. If weather forecasts call for conditions that will not permit us to celebrate Mass outdoors, a notification will be sent at least 12 hours before the start time of that Mass. Music will be minimal. Out of my concern for warmer weather ahead, I will do my best to celebrate Mass under one hour.

Baptisms can be celebrated, limited to 15 or less in attendance. Reconciliation is celebrated taking all necessary precautions. Weddings and other celebrations continue to maintain the 25% occupancy limitation. First Holy Communion at St. Teresa and Sacred Heart will be celebrated outdoors on Sunday, June 14 at 2 PM and 6 PM respectively. Those in RCIA coming into the faith of the Catholic Church will be received on Sunday, June 28 at 1:30 PM at St. Teresa. Confirmation will be celebrated by Bishop Rice at Sacred Heart on a future date to be announced, and if candidates are not able to make that date, they can opt for another date from nearby parishes to celebrate Confirmation. All other postponements will be made up at future dates.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason. My number at the office is 624-7333, the rectory at 624-8888, or via my cell at 450-4055. With my best wishes and prayers for our collective health and safety, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. William W. Hennecke, Jr., pastor