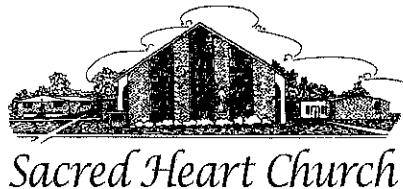


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May 7, 2020

My dear parishioners:

Greeting and salutations in Our Lord Jesus Christ! I hope and pray that you are all weathering the pandemic as best as possible. But I do bring you good news that most of you are already aware of – that is that Bishop Folda has given us permission to celebrate Mass publicly again. Alleluia! With that said, I would like to make sure that everyone understands all the restrictions that the bishop has put into place. He wrote us pastors a separate letter with the restrictions. They are:

- everyone must maintain proper social distancing of at least 6 feet
- parishioners are strongly encouraged to wear a mask
- every other pew in the church is to be closed off
- the main aisle is to be marked off in 6-foot increments to receive Holy Communion
- only Holy Communion in the hand is allowed, not on the tongue
- each pew is to be clearly marked so that people are 6 feet away from each other. Families of the same household can sit together.
- all hymnals, missalettes and pew cards are to be removed
- no social gatherings
- no Precious Blood of Jesus
- no extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion
- no congregational singing
- no choir singing
- no passing of the collection basket. There will be a basket in the back of the church. I ask the ushers to watch over it and bring it to the appropriate place after Mass is over.
- no sign of peace or shaking hands
- hand sanitizer is to be placed at the back of the church
- anyone with any illness is not to come to church
- no greeters to hand out the bulletins
- still no Holy Communion to the homebound
- everyone is still dispensed to not come to Mass on Sunday
- no confessions in the confessional

Please keep in mind that these restrictions are only temporary and will loosen when things get better or tighter (God forbid) if things get worse. I know that when we get together, it is only natural to want to get together and talk. PLEASE be careful when doing this by maintaining proper social distancing, especially when leaving the pews when Mass is concluded. I will NOT be at the back of the church greeting people and shaking hands like I normally do. This is a hardship for all of us but the quicker we follow the guidelines, the faster it will be that things return to normal.

The bishop asked all pastors to lay out their churches with 6 foot spacing in mind, blocking off every other pew and to put markers in every pew where people are to sit and the main aisle where people line up to receive Holy Communion. This has been done and that leaves us with roughly 54 spaces for seating in each church with a few extra in the choir loft. If more people show up at Sacred Heart, I ask the ushers to direct them to the social hall where they can listen to the Mass and then walk over to receive Holy Communion at the appropriate time all the while maintaining the appropriate distancing.

In regard to hearing confessions, in Carrington I will be hearing them the usual time on Saturday night from 4:00-4:45pm in the room next to the social hall kitchen, not in the confessional. There will be just two chairs in there eight feet apart. In Sykeston, please catch me after Mass and we will find a suitable location at that time. Anyone can call me for a private confession at any time.

The pope has asked that we pray the rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet on the Sundays of May between the hours of 7-8pm. In addition, he has added two new prayers to be prayed at the end of the rosary (please check the insert). I believe that it will be through the power of prayer that God will help shorten this pandemic.

In closing, I wish to thank all of you for doing your part to bring a speedy end to what is a very trying experience for all of us. Please be aware that you are in my daily prayers. I encourage you to keep your prayer lives strong so that God may fill you even more with His fantastic mercy and grace!

In the Hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Terry Dodge". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Fr. Terry Dodge