

December 4, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

These truly are unprecedented times. Mass attendance here on Sundays had been steadily rising, and yet, now we're hearing that cases of Covid 19 are steadily rising once more in Stafford, Fredericksburg, and Spotsylvania. What will Mass attendance do next?

In the hope that our Sunday Mass attendance would continue to rise, Father Lino and I, together with our office staff, put our heads together to see how we might insure that every parishioner who wants to assist at Sunday Mass can do so. We discussed several ways to do this and came to agree on the following temporary measure.

Starting on December 12, we will introduce a new Saturday evening Mass and confession schedule to help us address the needs and challenges that the Corona virus is presenting us with now. There will be two anticipated Sunday Masses on Saturdays, *pro tem*; at 4:00 pm and 5:30 pm. Confessions will follow then from 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm.

Our hope and intention is that those parishioners who can't reserve their preferred Mass time will readily take another. That is why we are introducing a new schedule. If we are not filling up the other Masses we will go back to our current Saturday schedule. We hope to fill all the Masses each weekend. Should there be a return to an earlier phase of Covid-19 restrictions, our first change will also be to return again to our current Saturday schedule. Attending Mass in our parish is one of the safest ventures you can embark on.

Now, I have good news about Christmas. The Holy Father has granted a special indulgent for Christmas Eve 2020 only which will allow us to have an additional Christmas Eve Mass earlier in the day. That Mass will be offered at 3:00 pm.

Therefore, the schedule of Masses for Christmas Eve, December 24th will be 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:00 pm and 9:00 pm. I will celebrate the 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm Masses. Father Lino will celebrate the 3:00 pm Mass and the 7:00 pm Mass. He will celebrate the 7:00 pm Mass in Spanish. Please note that our usual Thursday morning Masses at 7:30 and 9:00 have been cancelled for this December 24th.

Our volunteers will be decorating the church for Christmas on the 24th and so we will not be open before 2:15 pm. The Legion of Mary will lead us in the Holy Rosary 20 minutes before all the Masses of Christmas.

Christmas Day Masses will be at 12:00 am (Midnight), 7:30 am, 9:00 am and 10:30 am. Please know that you must register for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses in advance. Registrations open on December 17th and close on December 21st.

With kindest regards, missing you and wishing you all a most blessed Advent, I remain

Your grateful pastor,

Father DeMartino