

My dear Brothers and Sisters of St. Mary, Star of the Sea,

I hope this letter finds all of you doing well and ready to begin the slow return to normal. As most of you have heard, we will begin celebrating Masses on Sunday, May 10, 2020 but at a reduced capacity. The sanitizing that must be done before each Mass consumes a great deal of time and we do not have much time between Masses to complete this work. Also, only the bathroom in the gated patio area will be open to the public. We do not have time to sanitize all the bathrooms and toilets. We apologize in advance for this inconvenience. Keeping all these things in mind I want to make the following statements:

- The church will be closed on Saturday so it can be sanitized and prepared for the weekend liturgies.
- Confessions will only take place by appointment from Wednesdays-Fridays. Please, call the office to make an appointment.
- **No one is obligated to come to Mass during this time. All are still dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass at least for the next several weeks.**
- We will only have two weekend Masses. Saturday 5pm and Sunday morning at 9:30am.
- The Social Distancing at 25% capacity for our church is approximately 65 persons per Mass.
- If you arrive after the 65 persons have entered and filled the church, we are required by law and by the Bishop's mandate to close the doors to anyone else. I sincerely apologize for this fact, and want to ask your forgiveness in advance if you are turned away. Please, understand that we have no choice but to do this.
- When we are at 50%, we will add the 11:30 Mass to accommodate the additional persons wishing to attend Mass.
- Please, do not come to the church if you are ill or showing any signs of being ill. Even if you have allergies and are sneezing a great deal, please, refrain from coming to the Masses. If you have a persistent cough, please, refrain from coming to Mass at this time.
- When entering the church, please try to avoid touching door handles or any other fixtures unnecessarily. Sanitizing wipes will be available at the entrance of the church if you wish to avail yourselves of these.
- There will be a collection basket at the entrance of the church. Please, place your contribution immediately into the basket since we will not take up a collection in the usual manner.
- Try to stay six feet away from any other persons who are not with you.
- You will be directed to your seat by a team of volunteers. Please, follow their direction.
- The church will be filled from the front (altar area) to the back.
- Communion will be done single file and one side of the church will receive followed by the other side of the church. The priest will give instructions for this process.
- No one is to wear gloves to receive communion.
- Communion during Mass will only be given in the hand. Those who wish to receive on the tongue will receive after Mass so that special precautions can be taken.
- After the final blessing, the congregation will be dismissed row by row beginning with the back of the church and ending with the front area closest to the altar.

What a great challenge this time has been for us, but with God's help we will make it through this time and get back to normal with even more enthusiasm for our faith. I don't want to say much with this letter, because there will be many more notices made available to you by the diocese. Please, read carefully any notices on parish website and Facebook and the diocesan website.

Thank you for your patience and God bless all of you,

Fr. Emilio