

Dear Parishioners:

Over the past few weeks, the number of coronavirus cases has exponentially increased in the Allegheny County area including West Deer Township. The numbers in our local area are low but nonetheless has likewise exponentially increased. As such, the Allegheny County Department of Health contact tracers have been “overwhelmed” with new cases. Additionally, both AHN and UPMC have more and more beds utilized for COVID-19 patients, leaving few rooms for people with other serious medical conditions. Anecdotally, in-hospital professionals express to me serious concerns as to the progression of this current wave.

Recommendations on Mass Attendance

- The Episcopal **Dispensation** from attending Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation remains. However, there is an implied expectation you will at least watch Mass on TV or live-stream.
- People **not feeling well** for any reason **MUST NOT ATTEND MASS** until cleared by your doctor.
- Having a negative **recent test for COVID-19** does not mean you are currently still negative.
- If you have been directly exposed to someone tested positive for the COVID-19 virus or has symptoms of the COVID-19 virus, **DO NOT ATTEND MASS UNTIL CLEARED BY YOUR DOCTOR.**
- If you have recently traveled to or from a “hot spot”, please do not attend Mass for 2 weeks (See list of hot spots here:
 - <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx>).
- It is expected that when you attend Mass at Our Lady of the Lakes Parish whether at Transfiguration Church or Saint Victor Church please ensure:
 - You have **properly washed your hands with soap and water**. YouTube instruction is on the website.
 - You **properly sanitize your hands** when you cannot properly wash them with soap and water. YouTube instruction is on the website.
 - You maintain a **proper distance of 6 feet or greater** between others except those from the same household. YouTube instruction is on the website.
 - You have **face to face contact with someone** closer than six feet, ensure it is under 15 minutes in a 24-hour period of time.
 - Wear a face mask at all times except when receiving Holy Communion.
KNOW HOW TO PROPERLY APPLY, MAINTAIN, REMOVE AND DISPOSE/CLEAN THE MASK.
SIMPLY WEARING A MASK DOES NOT GUARANTEE ANYONE’S SAFETY! YouTube instruction is on the website.

Let us continue to have a Holy Advent season,
Fr. Jim