

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Happy Easter! Christ is risen! Alleluia! I hope this finds you well and finding joy amidst this extraordinary Easter season.

As mentioned in my parish letter from this past Sunday, the Archbishop has published an Archdiocesan plan for reopening our churches and resuming sacramental ministry. The plan requires each parish to make a local plan of their own, according to the directions and guidelines of the Archdiocesan plan. The first phase of reopening is allowed to begin tomorrow, Wednesday, May 13. In this phase, we are allowed to reopen the churches for private prayer and devotions and for scheduled times of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

While this is exciting news, charitably I must stress how important it is that we all remain informed on, and cooperate with, the health and safety protocols of our parish.

For the upcoming days, St. Joseph Church will be open for private prayer as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Wednesday, May 13 | 9:00am – 5:00pm |
| Thursday, May 14 | 9:00am – 5:00pm |
| Friday, May 15 | 9:00am – 5:00pm |
| Saturday, May 16 | 9:00am – 5:00pm |
| Sunday, May 17 | 9:00am – 5:00pm |

For the upcoming days, I plan to expose the Blessed Sacrament and be available for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Wednesday, May 13 | 3:00pm – 5:00pm |
| Thursday, May 14 | 9:00am – 11:00am; 3:00pm – 5:00pm |
| Friday, May 15 | 3:00pm – 5:00pm |
| Saturday, May 16 | 9:00am – 11:00am; 3:00pm – 5:00pm |
| Sunday, May 17 | 9:00am – 11:00am; 3:00pm – 5:00pm |

While the intention of providing these services is to enable increased spiritual and pastoral care for the faithful, the number one priority remains *the protection of health and safety*. For this reason, we are depending on the cooperation of our faithful to be responsible and charitable for the health and safety of others, especially our brothers and sisters who are more vulnerable.

Pastors have been asked to make the following information very clear to our faithful:

THOSE WHO ARE 65 AND OVER AND THOSE WITH HIGH-RISK HEALTH CONDITIONS SHOULD REMAIN AT HOME. THIS IS THE POPULATION THAT IS MOST VULNERABLE TO THE CORONAVIRUS.

OF COURSE, THOSE WHO ARE SYMPTOMATIC OR HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 SHOULD NOT ENTER A CHURCH UNTIL RELEASED TO DO SO BY THEIR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL.

THE DISPENSATION FROM THE OBLIGATION TO PARTICIPATE AT MASS ON SUNDAYS IS EXTENDED IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS AND THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF INDIANA UNTIL AUGUST 15, 2020.

Again, in order to open our church for private prayer, we are relying on our faithful to cooperate and do their part in keeping our worship space safe for everyone. If you enter the church, you will notice many signs seeking your attention and directing you to follow safe and healthy practices when stopping by to pray. The intention is to communicate clearly and keep everyone moving, either into church or into confession.

While many of us are desiring to have social gatherings and to be together as a community, now is not yet that time. We are not opening the church for this reason. There should be absolutely no social gathering either inside or outside church. Please remain with your family only.

Please wear a mask to cover your mouth and nose. Immediately when you enter the church, you will find hand sanitizer. While the church will be sanitized after closing each day, the spaces and surfaces which may be used by individuals and families throughout the day will not be cleaned after private use. Rather, each person or family will be responsible for disinfecting the seating they intend to use before using it. After you have entered the front doors of church, when you are in the narthex, just before entering the worship space, you will find a small table with paper towels and disinfectant spray. Before entering to pray, please generously spray disinfectant on some paper towels, find the pew space you intend to use, wipe down the surfaces you may touch (top of pew in front of you, top of back of pew, kneeler, etc.), and discard the used paper towels in one of the trash bins in the aisles. By this process, each person or family will ensure the sanitation of the space they intend to use.

As you enter the church to be seated, you will notice that many of the pews have been roped off. This is to help ensure safe spacing between separate households who may be stopping by to pray. If the need arises for multiple households to share the same pew, please ensure the space of at least one-kneeler-length exists between the two households.

When you are finished praying, please exit the church from the doors leading directly into the parking lot. There will be signs around, and arrows on the floor, reminding you of the flow for entering and exiting church.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation will be made available in the Hillman Room (the cry room). If you are at church when the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is available and would like to make a sacramental confession, please form a line in the narthex, according to the signs. There are markings on the ground to designate safe distancing from others while in line. If the line grows beyond the markings, three carpet tiles between people or families is sufficient space. If the line grows too long for safe distancing, please consider entering the church for prayer and returning to the line when it has become shorter. It is my intention to offer plenty of opportunities for confessions so that no one feels pressure due to time constraints. Likewise, if you are in need of confession but the times offered do not work for your schedule, please contact me for arranging another time: 812-738-2717 or frkyle@catholic-community.org.

During this extraordinary time, it is not advisable to use public restrooms if it can be avoided. Our restrooms will remain partially open and will be cleaned and sanitized at the end of each day. Please only use them to wash your hands or in the case of “emergency.”

In summary:

- Please make charitable decisions for the safety and well-being of yourself and others.
- Please wear a mask to cover your mouth and nose.
- Please use hand sanitizer after entering church.
- Please maintain safe social distancing of six feet, and offer a greeting without contact.
- Please sanitize the area you intend to use before you use it.
- Please do not use the restroom except to wash hands or in the case of “emergency.”
- Please cooperate and do your part in following directions and providing a safe space for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In my mind, the objective of visiting church during this time is simple: **PRAY and GO**. Or: **CONFESS, PRAY, and GO**. Again, it is not yet time to gather. That time will come. And more will be available in the upcoming weeks, but only if we are able to work together and maintain a space where we can eliminate the spread of the virus.

Thank you for your attention to these directions. I am sorry that we cannot offer more at this time. I am looking forward to opening the church and seeing you again.

Pax Christi (Peace of Christ),
Fr. Kyle