

Dear Parishioners,

As we prepare to celebrate the great feast of Corpus Christi this weekend, I want to update you on a few things. First, this Sunday, June 14, is Father Michael Lyons' 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of priesthood ordination. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 14, 1970, which, just like this year, was Corpus Christi Sunday! What a great joy it is for us to have Father Michael living in our parish and providing us with his continued priestly ministry. Thank you, Father Michael, for so many dedicated and devoted years of priestly service to our diocese. We are so grateful for you! Due to the pandemic, we have had to cancel and reschedule a public celebration of Father Michael's anniversary that was originally scheduled for this weekend. We are looking at possible options for rescheduling, and I will keep you posted once that has been decided. In the meantime, please remember Father Michael in your prayers this Sunday as he celebrates his blessed day!

As far as our Sunday worship is concerned, last Friday, the governor allowed for greater occupancy at church services, along with other places of public accommodation. Churches may now hold indoor services in which the number of people gathered is 50% or less of the church's fire code capacity. We are still waiting to hear from our bishops how that may affect us at the parish level. The obvious challenge is that even though greater occupancy has been allowed, we are still needing to provide for social distancing during Mass between parishioners who are not of the same household. So, given that we have not heard otherwise, we will simply keep in place the number of pews available to sit in that we currently have. If and when I receive further instruction from our diocesan administrator, Father Bissonette, I will be sure to relay that to you.

Regarding in-person church attendance, allow me to update all of us on how that is going. Last weekend's Sunday Masses saw a slight increase from the attendance numbers of the weekend before, but the number of people attending is still very light. As we look toward transitioning back to attending Mass in person, be encouraged by knowing that the parish staff is continuing to take the health and safety of our parishioners very seriously. We are sanitizing the church after every Mass, both Sunday Masses and daily Masses. We have masks available at both churches for those who wish to take one. Myself and Fr. Michael are taking great care during the distribution of Holy Communion to be as sanitary as possible. While I know that there are parishioners who desire to return to Mass, but are not yet comfortable doing so, be assured that we look forward to the day of your return, and we are doing everything we can to make the church as safe and clean a place as possible. Knowing that nothing can replace the celebration of Mass in-person, and that the worship and reception of the Holy Eucharist is critical to our spiritual health, and that we truly miss the opportunity to see many of our fellow parishioners, we hope to be able to see you soon!

A couple of practical things to note: first, new missalettes for Sunday Mass will be available starting next weekend, June 20-21. At each parish, the missalettes will be placed in the entryway so that parishioners can take a copy for themselves to keep and take home with them. Please write your name in it, and take with you to and from church if you wish to read along with the scripture readings at Mass.

Second, as you know, I have been celebrating an additional Mass at 2:00pm on Sunday afternoons as a way to attempt to spread out the number of parishioners over three Masses at Holy Spirit, instead of just two. However, the numbers of attendees, both at the two original Mass times, and at the new 2:00pm Mass time have been so low as to not warrant me continuing to offer the 2:00pm Mass at this time (last Sunday there were only seven attendees at the 2:00pm

Mass). Therefore, this Sunday, June 14, will be the last 2:00pm Mass that I will be offering at Holy Spirit. After this Sunday, I will no longer be offering Mass at 2:00pm. We will return to our regular schedule of Mass at 4:30pm on Saturdays, and 11:00am on Sundays. St. Mary's Mass schedule will remain the same.

Finally, with the end of the fiscal year approaching, it's budget time at both parishes. In next week's weekly email update, I will be providing updates about each of our parishes' financial status and health. For now, please remember that with the lack of people attending Masses in person, there is very limited opportunity for us to receive donations and financial offerings at the Masses themselves. That's one of the reasons why I am so grateful that both of our parishes have recently established an online giving option. Especially if you are not currently comfortable attending Mass in person, this is a great way to continue to support your parish financially from home. Getting signed up for online giving is really easy and quick, and our parish staff is happy to help if you have questions. To get started, you can simply go to your own parish's website and click on the online giving link. If you have questions, feel free to call the parish office. And thank you, my dear parishioners, for your continued generosity during these difficult and uncertain times. Be assured that God will bless you for your financial support of your parish!

May God bless you and keep you safe!

-Fr. Steve Laflamme