

GOING TO 100%

May it please God to bring our long COVID winter to an end soon. Based in part on restriction changes from the Governor that will take effect on May 19, the following directives from the diocese will be implemented here at St. Elizabeth. Keep in mind that our churches have not proven to be dangerous places. We all need to be calm and reasonable.

The **dispensation** from the obligation to attend Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation Masses remains in effect. We anticipate a future lifting of the dispensation together with the entire New York Province when we can accommodate our people without distancing limits. However, at this point if you are going out to stores, restaurants, or other gatherings outside your home there is no reason not to return to in-person participation in the Holy Mass and Sacraments.

Beginning May 19, 2021, 100% of our church's capacity may be occupied. However, some social distancing should remain in place as best as possible. There is a great deal of debate within the scientific community about the effectiveness of social distancing, and regulations vary from state to state. Schools are encouraged to maintain 3 feet, while businesses are told 6 feet. Currently, the NY State regulation is still 6 feet. We can only do our best.

- Let's be reasonable, wear masks and maintain *some distance*. Six feet is not a "magic number" for protection, and we do not need to be exact.
- Those who do not belong to the same household/family should try to maintain *some distance*, but clergy, ushers and assistants should not act as "enforcers".
- Tape/ropes/pew dividers can be removed completely while the above points are observed.
- People overwhelmed with fear should remain at home.

Masks should continue to be worn, except by children under 2 years of age and those individuals with breathing difficulties. However, as warmer weather approaches and our air conditioning struggles to maintain a comfortable temperature, take the mask off if you have any difficulty breathing. Let's not make a bad situation worse and have people passing out.

There will be no attempts to "**segregate**" members of the faithful based on their vaccination status. No one will be asked their vaccination status.

Let's all be patient with one another as we navigate this next chapter. See you in church.

God bless you all,
Fr. Sikorski