

SAINT MARY'S OF THE LAKE

INITIAL NOTES CONCERNING

The Gradual Reopening of the Parish & The Reinstatement of Public Masses

First of all, thank you for your continued prayers and support throughout this time. As we happily heard last Friday, the State of Indiana is slowly moving forward with a gradual reopening plan. The Bishops of Indiana recently met digitally to discuss their goals and timelines for the reopening of parishes across the state. I received specific directives from the Diocese yesterday and have been working for the past couple days with our staff and others to specify these directives and lay out a plan for implementation here at Saint Mary's of the Lake. This parish-specific plan and outline of procedures will be finalized in the next few days and will be posted and communicated through various media. Below are the important notes to consider and of which to be aware as we move forward in the next several weeks.

- (1) Bishop's Letter to the Faithful concerning the gradual reopening of our parishes was received today electronically and will be distributed via email, on our website and in this coming weekend's digital bulletin.
- (2) Public Masses will resume on the weekend of May 23-24 and Daily Masses as well after that weekend.
- (3) Diocesan Directives and our specific parish directives and procedures are being finalized and will be posted and distributed in the very near future.
- (4) Main points to consider moving forward.
 - Those who are especially at risk (over 65, with co-morbidity health issues) are encouraged to continue sheltering in place.
 - The dispensation to attend public Mass on Sunday is extended until August.
 - We must observe strict social distancing in the church and on the grounds.
 - Mass attendance will be limited, and once the church is full, we cannot admit any more people. Only 3 people in every other pew, families can sit together in a pew. Between 50-60 at each Mass.
 - All in attendance will be required to wear a mask or face covering of some kind.
 - Communion will only be offered under one species, you are not obliged to receive Holy Communion.
 - *IF RECEIVING COMMUNION ON THE TONGUE*: Be sure to extend your tongue out so that the celebrant can easily place the Sacred Host on your tongue.
 - *IF RECEIVING COMMUNION IN THE HAND*: Be sure to hold your palms out flat so that the celebrant can easily place the Sacred Host on the palm of your hand. DO NOT cup your palms or grab for the Sacred Host with your fingers.
 - More weekend Masses will be added temporarily to our parish schedule to help alleviate/avoid overcrowding. A total of 5 Weekend Masses will be made available (2 on Saturday and 3 on Sunday). Specific times are still TBD.

(5) WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! If we do not have the assistance we need, we will not be able to reopen.

- *Mask Makers*. If you are able and would like to make masks to give away at the parish, please place each clean mask in an individual Ziplock bag and drop them either at the office front door or the rectory. The parish will not possibly be able to provide a mask for every individual so please try to secure one for yourself before coming.
- *Sanitation Teams*. A crew of about 10 individuals will be needed to fully sanitize the church before the initial reopening. Small teams of 2-3 individuals will be needed to sanitize the church after each Mass.
- *Ushers*. We will need at least 4 individuals to serve as ushers for each Mass. This will involve directing attendees to appropriate seating areas, directing attendees during the distribution of Holy Communion and directing attendees when leaving the church building after each Mass.
- *Sanitation Teams* for after Masses and *Ushers* need to be those individuals who do not fall into the “at risk” group.
- Donate a roll of paper towels if you are able. These are rather difficult to come by these days and they will be needed for the cleaning of the church.
- Please email Donna or leave a message at the parish office if you would be willing to volunteer to help in any way.

We will keep you posted as specifics are finalized. Please communicate this information to folks who you know do not receive electronic communications. Consider printing out documents and getting them to those who don't have electronic access.

Most importantly of all, we must proceed with a spirit of Charity, Patience, Flexibility and Humility as we move forward. If we all cooperate and work together we will see this through and at the same time grow in holiness.

In Paternal Love,

Fr. Bill Meininger, *Pastor*