

June 8, 2020

Dear Parishioner,

I am sure you have already heard the good news that we will be open for masses starting Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. It is truly a time to rejoice.

A tremendous amount of work went into the preparation for the reopening. We had an extensive form from the Diocese that had to be filled out before we received permission to reopen. Mary Jane Kelso filled it out after working many days on it. We sent it in on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. On Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, we were notified that we could reopen.

We will not be able to use North School for mass this summer due to the pandemic. In order to make up for that we will have a 5:30PM Sunday Mass beginning on June 14<sup>th</sup>. The schedule for the remaining three weekends in June will be: Saturday – 4PM; Sunday – 8AM, 9:30AM, 11AM & 5:30PM. On July 5<sup>th</sup> we will go to our full summer schedule that will include the 7AM on Sunday. We ask that you come in a little earlier.

Things are going to change! The ushers will now seat you, starting with the first front pew. St. Philips Hall will also be available for all masses. At the present time we are only allowed to have 30 percent of the capacity of our church. That could change by the time you receive this letter. I hope we will not have to turn anyone away. But that is possible.

We ask that you use the front doors to enter, unless you are going to the hall. We certainly ask you to keep 6 feet apart from one another, unless you are with family members. We will be using every other pew. The use of masks is mandatory unless under the age of 2 or you have difficulty breathing. Holy communion will be received at the end of Mass.

A committee has been formed for sanitizing the church after each mass. Barbara Cawley heads this group. We can still use more helpers. The bathrooms are to be used only for emergency situations. They also will be sanitized. Also, there may be a change in the way the parking lot is done this year. Our parking attendants will be giving you more directions.

This is a great opportunity for you to truly practice your Catholic faith. You will be able to love in new situations. Please be patient, this is new for all of us. Be kind and flexible with the ushers and those who are directing you.

Most people can't wait until they come back. Some have concerns. We understand that. Attending Mass is a serious obligation. That is for the good of the church and the individual person. However, Bishop Sullivan has dispensed us from that obligation during this pandemic. He does not do this lightly. If you are not comfortable coming at this time, stay home! If you are at high risks to contracting Covid-19, stay home! The same is true if you are in any way sick.

Our live stream mass will continue. I am grateful to Gary Paul for getting us started with that. Jennifer Sigmund, along with Deacon Lenny have continued that great work. Gary is still available for advice when we need it.

We are off to a good start with the House of Charity – Bishop’s Appeal. Our theme this year is who is our neighbor? Our neighbors are those who live next door to us and also the ones who live half way around the world. Great opportunity to help the sons and daughters of God during very difficult times.

I want to thank our dedicated staff for all they have done the last two months. Especially Jane Staunton who has been working every day for the good of the parish. Paul Staunton and Chris Domenick have done a great job keeping everything sparkling.

We will be having something for Father Jose the last week of June. I think we all know he will be going to Indiana. We are not sure at this time whether we are able to have food. Regardless, there will be something for him. We will let you know when.

God Bless,

*Fr. Ed*

## **Do we have your email address?**

Last week, we sent our first St. Thomas email, updating parishioners about the beginning stages of reopening the church. If you did not receive this email, then there is a good chance we do not have your current email address.

Send us an email, with your first and last name and family email address to [office@stabrig.org](mailto:office@stabrig.org) and request to be put on our “Stay in Touch” email list. Thank you!