

June 5, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We would like to thank you for your generous and patient efforts during these past few weeks of the first phase of our return to the public celebration of the Mass and other sacraments with adaptation of several restrictions and protocol out of charity and concern for the well-being of our neighbors. The Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life and draws us into fellowship with God and the Church.

With this in mind, in accordance with revised “Temporary COVID-19 Protocols” issued by the Diocese of Austin on 29 May 2020, we are modifying our parish protocols *effective this weekend, 6-7 June 2020*. In accordance with the diocesan directives, we have established the following protocol for the sake of guidance and good order as we continue to navigate the challenges of corporate worship in a time of pandemic.

- **The Bishop of Austin has extended the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.** There are still legitimate threats to our health from the highly contagious virus. If you are sick or exhibiting symptoms of any illness, please stay home. If you are over 65 or have an underlying health condition, we continue to encourage you not to attend Mass.
- **We continue to strongly encourage those attending Mass to wear masks or scarfs** over their mouths and nose inside the church building to help prevent the spread of the virus. This is especially important as our Mass attendance continues to increase.
- **We continue to ask the faithful to maintain safe distancing.** In order to ensure social distancing, Masses will be limited to 50% of capacity, about 400 persons/family units spaced *four feet apart*.
- **We will continue to provide hand sanitation stations at the entrance of the church, and we will continue to clean and disinfect the pews and other regularly touched surfaces between Masses.**
- **At Sunday Mass, we will continue the practice of having ushers seat and dismiss those coming for Mass.** While we realize that this is an imposition and inconvenience, we believe it is necessary to ensure safe distancing and to guarantee that the church is emptied and cleaned in a timely fashion prior to the next Mass. Please be courteous and respectful to the ushers who are very generously giving their time to assist us in this effort. **We will discontinue this practice at daily Mass** because of lighter attendance and because cleaning can happen at a more leisurely pace.
- **We will not be passing the collection plates during the Offertory.** The baskets will remain next to the exits as they have been for the past few weeks. Please consider signing up for [online giving](#) as an alternative to placing an envelope in the collection plate.

- **We will return to our normal practice of Communion lines**, rather than bringing Communion to the pews. All persons will come to the center aisle for Communion so that we can limit the number of ministers distributing Holy Communion. Please respect the guidance of the ushers who will be helping maintain appropriate spacing in the Communion lines.
- **We continue to strongly encourage the faithful to receive Holy Communion in the hand.** While we recognize and respect the venerable custom of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, the current expert medical opinion regarding the transmission of COVID-19 is that the virus is passed through small droplets in a person's breath received in close contact. We realize that this request is very difficult for many of us to consider because of our sincere piety and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. However, we believe this to be necessary at this time. Out of charity and consideration for your neighbor, please continue receiving Holy Communion in the hand temporarily.
- Updated information about Baptisms, Weddings, Quinceañeras, and Funerals will be posted to our website and Facebook page in the coming days.

The past few months have been very difficult for many people in our parish, diocese, country, and world. As Christians, we take solace in St. Paul's words to the Romans: "For we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." With that in mind, these times have also afforded us an opportunity for spiritual renewal through intense prayer and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Thus, even in the midst of tribulation we continue our important work of continuing to build up and further the Kingdom of God. We are grateful for your many sacrifices and prayers that you have contributed to this holy effort. Assuring you and your families of our continued prayers and support, we remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Rev. Luis Alberto Cáceres and Rev. Henry Finch