We have just received word that the Ohio conference of bishops has cleared the way for us to celebrate public Masses beginning on May 25, 2020. It will clearly be a great blessing to gather together again and celebrate Mass as a parish family. Easter is coming – although it took us almost to Pentecost to get there.

Having said that, the risk of COVID 19 is still real and we have to be cautious in how we return. **The Archbishop is still dispensing with the Sunday obligation for the foreseeable future**. If you are elderly and / or have pre-existing conditions that would make you more vulnerable, you should consider continuing to stream our Masses online if you have that capability. You can also watch the Mass on TV where available. This is not a substitute for participating in Mass with the Church community; however, “discretion is the better part of valor”. Please remember that prudence is also a virtue. We want to offer people the opportunity to join with us for Mass; however, we also want people to be physically safe.

If you are feeling ill in any way, please be considerate of other parishioners and stay home. Our priests will be practicing this same principle.

In addition to encouraging the most vulnerable to be extra cautious, we are also encouraging people to think in term of participating in Mass, and not necessarily participating in Sunday Mass. Let me explain. Of course, Sunday is the day of Jesus Christ’s resurrection. It is a day of prominence in the Christian Tradition. We have been raised to “keep holy the Sabbath”. None of that has changed. However, in these unprecedented times, we are trying to be prudent. Often times, prudence requires sacrifice. **This means that we will continue to celebrate a limited Sunday Mass schedule (4:30pm on Saturday and 9:30 on Sunday)**. The goal of this is not to crowd people into two Masses for Sunday. Rather, we are encouraging parishioners to consider participating in any Mass during the week. The first week we will be celebrating noon Mass M-F and Saturday at 8:30 am. However, as we get a feel for the ebb and flow of Mass participants, we may be adding a Mass during a weekday evening or even potentially a weekend Mass.

Using reasonable social distancing principles, we can accommodate around 160 people with the Church and Chapel both open. I am reticent to handing out tickets or taking reservations in order to make sure that we can maintain social distancing. I am also reluctant to tell daily Mass attendees that they cannot come regularly. My prayer is that people will spread out their Mass attendance and avoid these extra steps. If we need to reevaluate this and place further limitations moving forward, we will keep you informed. As you might imagine, there will be other changes to Mass when we get back.

Please review the changes you will see when public Mass resumes.

These changes will make Mass look a little different for a while. Please focus on how blessed we are to be able to celebrate the Eucharist together and to the receive the Eucharist.

These measures may feel awkward at first, but they are clearly designed to help prevent the spread of the virus. I just ask that you be mindful that COVID 19 is still a reality. Maintain your 6’ from other parishioners and please do not congregate in larger groups in the parking lot. We want to provide for your spiritual needs, but we also want you to be safe. Please pray for the Church as we take this big step. Please pray for our world as we fight this disease.

Fr. Chris Worland