

May 21, 2020

Dear Parishioner,

As Pentecost approaches, we are reminded of the peace and power of the Holy Spirit alive within us and active in the Church. I am grateful to all the pastoral staff for working with me in incorporating the diocesan guidelines, pertaining to resuming public Masses, into a plan for St. Agnes. We will be reviewing & updating our procedures as we go along.

Bishop Boyea has announced that public celebrations of Mass can resume in the Diocese of Lansing beginning on Monday, May 18. Although Bishop Boyea has authorized public celebrations of Mass, no parish is required to begin on that date. Each pastor has been given the flexibility to determine the best date for re-opening his parish based on his individual parish situation. There are many considerations to be thought out with the safety of our parishioners foremost such as maintaining social distancing, personal protective gear, sanitization between Masses, etc.

In order to accomplish that, and to ensure we are as prepared as possible, I have made the decision to conduct our first weekday Mass on Monday, June 1, 2020 at 10am.

Our **weekday** Mass schedule June 1 through June 12 will be Monday, Thursday and Friday at 10am and Wednesday at 6:30pm.

Public celebration of **weekend** Masses will begin on Saturday, June 13, with the 4:30pm Vigil Mass and Sunday, June 14, at 8:30am & 11am.

*Video viewing of Sunday Mass will continue through July 31.*

Once we resume weekend liturgies on June 13 & 14 our weekday Mass schedule will be Wednesday at 6:30pm and Thursday & Friday at 10am with no scheduled liturgies on Monday & Tuesday.

Reconciliation will be available on Tuesdays from 3-4:30pm and Thursdays 6-7:30pm beginning on Thursday May 28.

Due to social distancing guidelines Mass attendance will be restricted to 50 people for weekday liturgies and 70 for weekends for the month of June and masks will be required to be worn by anyone entering the building.

**Here are your options for signing up for Mass attendance:**

- **Click this link to [Sign Up for WEEKDAY Mass](#)**
- **Click this link to [Sign Up for WEEKEND Mass](#)**
- **Or call the parish office to register.**

We will have teams of trained volunteers (Assembly Coordinators) to help guide and direct people before, during and after Mass. They will be sanitizing the facility following liturgies.

Families and individuals will be asked to remain socially distanced until directed where to sit by an Assembly Coordinator, and all must arrive together to be seated together. I am asking everyone for their patience as adjustments are being made to the way we are used to celebrating Mass. This may at times

lead to discomfort and frustration, so patience and charity of all involved will be essential to handling these changes. **It is strongly recommended that you arrive early to Mass so everyone can be properly seated.**

A few other changes you may notice:

- Holy Water and Baptismal fonts will remain empty.
- There will be no hymnals in the pews as there will be no congregational singing. According to the guidelines provided by the diocese the faithful should be encouraged to participate by silently uniting their minds and hearts to the words being sung and making the responses in a soft voice.
- At the Preparation of the Gifts/Offertory, we will not pass the collection baskets, and the gifts will not be brought down – stationary collection baskets will be available for you to place your offering.
- There will be no sign of peace or distribution of Precious Blood.
- The Assembly Coordinators will direct you and your family out of your pew for Communion, maintaining six feet between families or single individuals.
- We ask that you receive the Eucharist in your hand, not on your tongue, and that you not wear gloves (the Priest/EMHC will be wearing a mask and will sanitize their hands before and after the distribution of Communion and will do their best not to make contact with your hand.)
- We ask that you not congregate after Mass inside the church while we are still using social distancing protocol.
- The use of restrooms is discouraged, however if you need a restroom please use the handicapped accessible restroom by the chapel.

As the Bishop stated, dispensation from Sunday Mass remains in effect through July 31, and if you are in a high-risk category due to illness, age or other health issues, you are **strongly encouraged** to observe Bishop Boyea's dispensation by staying home. Please, do not come to Church if you are sick. *Video viewing of Sunday Mass will continue through July 31.* We also discourage children under seven from attending since they may find it difficult to follow social distancing and other hygienic behavior. You **must** wear a mask at Church. Even if you feel this is unnecessary for yourself, consider the peace of mind and safety of your fellow Catholics.

As you can see, these procedures have been carefully thought out with the safety of our parishioners as our number one priority. We will monitor attendance each week and keep up to date on the latest CDC and civic recommendations before making decisions to adjust any of these procedures. It is my prayer that we are all able to come back and enjoy Mass as a community and that we can, with patience and understanding, comply with all of these new procedures in such a way that will allow for a prayerful return to Mass and for the reception of the Eucharist for which you have had to go without for so long.

Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Nate Sokol*

Rev. Nate Sokol, pastor