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May 14, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

The last two months have changed our lifestyle from the luxuries of life such as, attending Mass, enjoying a dinner at our favorite restaurant, attending a sporting event, going to school, or just giving someone a hug or a handshake, and then going to being quarantined to our homes or limited activity to protect us and to slow the movement of the coronavirus. COVID-19 has become a new term that has changed our lifestyle in the present and still makes us aware for the future. The Coronavirus has affected us either subtly or drastically. We have been affected in the church as well with our Masses suspended. Who would have thought that the Masses would be suspended? However, the coronavirus feeds off social gatherings. We have to be aware of the spread of the virus, so social gatherings and activities were halted. Thanks be to God and your discipline that we are able to return to some type of normalcy and begin to reopen. Our churches will reopen for weekday Masses beginning on Monday, May 18th and weekend Masses on May 23rd and 24th. I will share some information with you.

We will begin to celebrate Mass again but we have some guidelines to follow to slow the spread of the virus. First, social distancing of 6 feet or more is a must if you are not living in the same household. Second, wash your hands as you enter and leave the church building; hand sanitizer product will be available. Third, I encourage you to wear a facemask as you enter the building. I have asked the ladies (quilters) of the parish to make some facemasks, and they will respond with 200 facemasks. If you do not have one, I invite you to take one and use it when you come to Mass. Fourth, the pews will be marked off for social distancing, so families need to sit together. Fifth, the missalettes will not be used, so they will not be available. Singing will be very minimal, so familiar music will be selected. Sixth, during the Mass, we will not extend the greeting of peace or the Blood of Christ. The ministers will take Communion to you so move to the aisle side of the pew. **For those who take communion by the tongue, I encourage you to receive by the hand. Otherwise, after Communion, you will come up the center aisle six feet apart, and I will give you Communion one at a time. I will have disinfectant available to cleanse my hands after each communicant.**

Seventh, after Mass, the ushers will release you to keep social distancing as you leave the building. Bulletins will be handed out as you walk out of church. No social gatherings will happen inside or outside the church. This also pertains to SCRIP sales and Coffee and Donut Sundays. If you want SCRIP, call the office or go on-line until we return to normal. Eighth, the Mass schedule has been temporarily changed to accommodate the guidelines and restrictions to keep people safe. Weekday Masses of Tuesday evening and Saturday morning Grotto will be cancelled until we return to normal. The Sunday Mass schedule of Saturday 4:30pm at St. Boniface, Sunday 6:30am at Sacred Heart, Sunday 8:00am at St. Boniface is the same **except the Sunday Morning 10:00 am Mass that has been moved to St. Agnes, so the building is properly disinfected. This schedule will be temporary until we reach normalcy then we will return to our normal schedule.** We are blessed to have another church to accommodate these guidelines and keep us safe.

Ninth, health officials are recommending those who are over sixty-five or have health issues to stay at home. You might even consider staying at home if you take care of a loved one. I also encourage it as well. I know some of you are itching to get back to Mass, but let us be patient; especially if you have health conditions. Bishop Siegel cares about you, so he has extended the dispensation for Sunday worship to at least August 15th. We will make available the Sunday Mass on Facebook at 8:00am if you don't feel safe to return. Tenth, I truly encourage you if you don't feel good, please stay at home to protect yourself and others. These guidelines are in place to protect each other. This virus is not over; we are only better prepared to handle it. In addition, we will resume Masses, but church activities (RCIA classes, First Communion, and Sacramental preparation) are still on hold until more positive numbers surface. I just encourage you to be patient with these guidelines and follow along to protect each other. We are all in this together.

Finally, I commend your generosity and concern the last two months to continue your financial responsibility to the parish that kept us similar to last year, and your cooperation with upcoming Social Raffles to make our budget. I also appreciate your thoughtfulness of others in the parish to check on them and help with their needs. Truly, that is a reflection of the Gospel. Even though this virus has changed our lifestyle, we could probably recollect some positive experiences that made us aware of something we missed or took for granted. I certainly encourage you to reflect on those experiences. Let us continue to pray for a vaccine and for each other. Certainly, you are in my prayers as we make this journey. Please stay safe.

God Bless you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. John G. Brosmer".

Fr. John Brosmer
Pastor of St. Boniface