



May 22, 2020

Dear St. Pascal Baylon Parishioners,

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy in these difficult times. I have carefully and prayerfully considered the May 20, 2020 letter from Archbishop Hebda and the Minnesota Catholic Bishops to all Minnesota Catholics as well as the existing Executive Order 20-56 from Governor Walz, and I have decided on the following plan of action for opening for public Masses at St. Pascal Baylon Church:

1. We will open for weekend Masses for a maximum of 10 people on Saturday & Sunday, May 30-31 and will follow our regular Mass schedule: 4:30 p.m. Saturday, 8:45 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday. If you would like to be selected by random drawing to be one of the 10 people attending one of our weekend Masses on May 30-31, please call the **parish office (651-774-1585)** starting Tuesday, May 26. Phones are answered between 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Please provide your name, phone number and the number of people (immediate household only) that would like to attend Mass. After hours callers may leave a voicemail. On Thursday, May 28 at 3:00 p.m., I will conduct a drawing for the 10 people (randomly selected) to attend a weekend Mass on May 30-31. The 10 people whose names are drawn will be notified. Starting June 1, phones are answered M-F, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. On Thursday at 3:00 p.m., I will randomly select the 10 people who will attend each Mass that upcoming weekend and they will be notified. This procedure will continue each week for the time being. Stay tuned for updates and adjustments. I appreciate your patience.

2. We will open for limited public weekday Masses for a maximum of 10 people on Tuesday, June 2 and follow our regular weekday Summer Mass schedule: 8:00 a.m., Tuesday-Friday. If you would like to be one of the 10 people to attend the 8:00 a.m. Mass on Tuesday-Friday, please arrive at church before Mass that day to be admitted into the church. Once the first 10 people have been admitted into the church, we are full for that Mass. If we find large crowds that wish to attend weekday Masses, we might start a weekday list of names and a random drawing system for weekday Mass.

3. We will continue to video record weekday and weekend Masses from St. Pascal's and post the videos on our parish YouTube channel. Later in the month of June, we are scheduled to have a permanent camera system installed in our church, and then we can broadcast live Masses on weekdays and weekends through our parish YouTube channel. The cost of the new camera system was covered by an anonymous donor. We will continue video recording and broadcasting our parish Masses online for the foreseeable future.

NEW PROCEDURES FOR CELEBRATING MASS STARTING MAY 30-31:

A. Before, during and after Mass, please follow strict guidelines for physical distancing of at least 6 feet away in all directions from people not living in your household.

B. Please use the hand sanitizer available at church entrances before and after Mass.

C. We will disinfect our church before each Mass.

D. People over age 65 are strongly encouraged to not attend public Masses until further notice. I mean no offense or insult to our senior members by saying this, but rather, I am concerned for your health.

E. Anyone showing symptoms of sickness such as fever, tiredness or dry cough should not attend public Masses. Anyone who has a household member who is sick or showing symptoms of sickness should not come to Mass.

F. Face masks are strongly urged for all people attending Mass but not for children under age two, according to the Center for Disease Control, since it may put children under age two at risk of suffocation. We will give you a face mask at the church entrance if you do not have one.

G. There will be no singing at Mass for the time being. If you wish to follow the readings at Mass, please bring your own book or use a digital device.

H. The Distribution of Communion will occur at the end of Mass in the back of church. Markers on the floor will indicate 6-foot intervals for the Communion Procession. I will be at the Communion station wearing a face mask. Please approach me at the Communion station wearing your face mask. I will hold up the consecrated host and say (through my face mask), "The Body of Christ." Please say, (through your face mask), "Amen." I will carefully place the host in your hand. Please take a step to the side, pull aside your face mask, place the host in your mouth, replace your face mask, and then depart the church immediately without stopping in the gathering space to socialize.

I. There will be no ushers at Mass for the time being. We will not pass the basket for the collection. Rather, you may drop your offering into the large basket next to the baptismal font or send in your offering via mail to the parish office or please use online giving. Also, the parish nursery is closed for the time being.

J. I am available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you by individual appointment. Please contact me through my phone number or email address listed at the end of this letter.

I know these new procedures sound out-of-place at Mass, but we are not in normal times right now. I also know that some of you may disagree with the decisions that I have made with these procedures for opening for limited public Masses at St. Pascal's. Let us remember to see the image of Christ in one another even when we disagree. The Archbishop has asked each pastor to make the best pastoral decisions they can for their parish, and that is what I have tried to do. I hope you know that as your shepherd, I love you and care about you very much.

I will keep you updated as we move forward. You are in my daily thoughts and prayers. The parish staff and I have been working hard to prepare for your return to Mass, and we will continue to do so. Thank you to our parish staff members for their work and ministry.

God Bless You,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Father John Mitchell".

Father John Mitchell, Pastor
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