

May 15, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are experiencing extraordinary times. The COVID-19 pandemic has captured headlines, cancelled conferences and sporting events, disrupted travel, shuttered businesses, closed churches and schools, relocated workers to home, and infected and killed tens of thousands of people in the United States. Like everyone here at the parishes of St Adalbert and St John the Baptist, we are grappling with this troubling time.

When Bishop McClory gave his permission for parishes in the Diocese of Gary to begin having Masses again following certain guidelines, I initiated our own task force that has met and has helped me to lay out plans for our parishes to begin the process of the celebration of the Eucharist with a congregation. Out of necessity, this will be done in a limited way.

Following the metrics set for us by the diocese, we have determined that at present the maximum capacity at St John's is 100 people and at St Adalbert's 45 people. We have determined that in our faith community, we will begin having people (up to 100) at the 10:00 Mass on Pentecost Sunday, May 31. We will continue to live stream this Mass which can be found on our website at stjohnbap.org or on our Facebook page.

Things will be much different if/when you come to Mass:

- 1) You will need to call the rectory at 219-659-0023 to make a reservation for Mass. If we are already filled, we will put you down for the next Sunday. We will only be taking reservations one week at a time.
- 2) You must wear a mask while in the church. You may only remove the mask to consume the host and you should receive communion only in the hand.
- 3) You will be directed as to when you may enter the church, sign-in at the door, and then be ushered to a seat. Those living in the same house may be seated in the same pew.
- 4) You will likewise be dismissed individually or as household units.
- 5) If you are sick, you should stay home. Anyone who is coughing or sneezing excessively will be asked to leave.
- 6) No one over the age of 65 should be attending the Masses per the CDC state guidelines and the guidelines established by all the bishops of Indiana. Although our elderly parishioners are longing to return to Mass, please do not attend. We value each of you and desire that you stay healthy. Bishop McClory has dispensed everyone from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass at least until August 15.

Know that I am praying without ceasing for all of you. Please feel free to contact anyone at the rectory if you have questions or prayer concerns. And please join with me in praying for God's grace to be a powerful force for healing and wholeness in our community, our country, and the world

Most Sincerely,

Father Mark Peres, cpps