

May 23, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Thank you all, once again, for all of your prayers and support throughout this pandemic. I'm happy to report that to date, there are many good things that have happened in the lives of many of our parishioners. I've said before many times that life before COVID was depressing and stressful for many people. There are some who are taking advantage of this to make changes to have a better life, one where God has a much higher place.

Certainly, there are also many struggling, but I'm pleased to let you know that we have been able to make sure those who have asked for assistance have received it through various non-profits in our area as well as the generosity of neighbors and friends inside and outside of the parish.

Our work at the parish is beginning to shift now towards reopening our parishes. Despite the president's comments on Friday about reopening, which some are interpreting as a demand to reopen, we are not ready for this yet. Please see this statement from the Bishops of Washington State:

[nwcatholic.org/news/lo...](http://nwcatholic.org/news/lo...)

Please know that as time has gone on our plans have changed and might change again. Because of that, I don't want to give a specific date when we can gather for Mass again, but I do want to share with you some details that will not change.

- Safety is our top priority as we prepare to reopen our parishes. If people come to Mass and find themselves worrying about their health, it will not be a fruitful spiritual experience. Furthermore, an outbreak of this illness is a very serious fear of mine. Knowing that people became seriously ill at Mass because I didn't do everything in my power to prevent it is not something I want on my conscience. We will only reopen if we can show that we have done everything within reason to ensure sickness will not spread in our parishes.
- Per a mandate from the Archdiocese, all parishes that do wish to reopen will have to demonstrate that they have a system and plan for how to sanitize the Church building before and after every Mass. We are working to ensure that we can meet these requirements, and we will not be able to resume public Mass

until we can show that we are meeting these requirements. (At this point I believe all of our parishes will be able to meet these requirements)

- Reopening will involve limiting the amount of people who can be in the Church. I don't want to give a specific number now because that number could increase or decrease by the time we can actually reopen. Also, each of our parishes might have a different number that they can accommodate. We are still trying to discern the best way to determine who will be able to attend those Masses. We have many ideas on the table for how to make these decisions and we are weighing the best options.
- Even after we reopen, the obligation to attend Mass will still be suspended so if you or anyone you know wants to choose to remain home for the time being, you may do that. If you are in a vulnerable population, I would suggest that you do continue to remain at home.
- We are currently working to improve our livestreams on Sundays for parishioners who are not able to attend Mass or who would prefer not to attend Mass once we reopen. At St. Rose, we will be installing internet into the Church and purchasing camera's and other equipment to make sure this is doable. We are exploring options for other parishes as well. My hope is that when we resume mass in the Church buildings that we will have a much better livestream product on a wider variety of platforms (youtube, vimeo, facebook, etc.).

Below is a link to a form you can fill out to let us know if you would like to attend Mass when we do reopen. Please fill it out whether you want to attend or not, so that we can make sure we have contacted everyone we need to contact. Here is the link:

[docs.google.com/forms/...](https://docs.google.com/forms/...)

In the meantime, continue to draw close to God in prayer and ask him to end this. I believe that our prayers are being answered daily. I believe that this pandemic would have been far worse without the direct and indirect fruit of our prayers. Our prayers have helped us and others comply with social distancing, they have strengthened healthcare workers, and they have helped many deal with economic peril. So keep praying! They really are helping.

Fr. Bryan