

19 May AD 2020

Dear Friends,

We're eager to welcome you back home to celebrate Holy Mass together again. Given the necessary restrictions, please review the following to help you prepare. In addition to these practical preparations, please do not neglect the necessary spiritual preparation - including making a good Confession (all normal times have resumed), of course! Thank you!

- 1) In everything, I am trusting all within our parish family to exercise truly excellent responsible and caring behavior; and I personally thank you for your diligence and concern to protect the most vulnerable.
- 2) We are leaning heavily on our ushers to assist all who come to Mass to be welcomed and comfortable with the various changes. If you would like to volunteer to be an usher, please call us right away (255.6134) or email parish@stjoemish.com.
- 3) Masses will follow the **normal schedule**. The **school gym** will have separate Masses for Sat 4:30pm and Sun 9:15am and 11:15am. In addition to being for potential overflow for the church, the gym will also be more **aggressively socially distanced**.
- 4) Except for little children and those who have trouble breathing, all are required to wear a **face covering**, which would be removed while in line for Holy Communion (and observing distancing while in line, and then put back on after receiving). We will have some face coverings to offer to folks who do not have one or forget to bring one.
- 5) Separate households will need to observe **social distancing** by occupying a different pew (every other pew will be unavailable) or by spacing 6 feet from an adjacent household within the same pew.
- 6) **Holy Communion** will be distributed at all Masses by only the priests for the time being and may, as always, be received either on the tongue or in the hand. Should the priest inadvertently touch you, he will pause distribution to purify and re-sanitize his hands prior to resuming. Please be patient with us, and in addition, please exercise great care in receiving (not moving, making sure your hands are flat, or your tongue extended and flat, etc). You may also find, as an additional precaution, that a priest speaks the formula 'the body of Christ' softly and while

you are still a distance from him; please respond with your 'amen' in the same manner and approach to receive in the normal way.

- 7) One change you may notice is the lack of **singing**. For the time being, due to increased risk of airborne transmission of the virus due to singing, we will enjoy only instrumental music and all parts of the Mass will be spoken rather than sung.
- 8) The **dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days** is extended until at least 15 August, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- 9) Those most at risk of death should they contract COVID are encouraged to remain home. Of course, no one is excluded from being able to return to Mass, and our additional restrictions are specifically *for* those who would be most at risk among us.
- 10) We will **livestream** every Sunday Mass on our parish's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/saintjoemish). You need not be 'on Facebook' to access the livestream, as our page is public. Of course there are plenty of other virtual options for Mass, as well.

Any questions, please call and we'll do our best to answer them! Also this Thursday May 21 at 7pm, I will host a Facebook Live event to further assist in our return to Mass, and will also be available to answer questions during the event (simply write those in the comments at the appropriate time).

St. Joseph, pray for us!

Father Chris