

***St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Ann Arbor.***

May 18, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Since I last wrote to you on May 8, we have had a little more guidance from the State and Diocese regarding the re-opening of our parish. Beginning the weekend of May 30/31, we are able to increase the number of parishioners at all our Masses. Sign up will be on a *first come first served* basis through our parish website, however, we ask that you consider the needs of all our community to be able to attend Mass during this difficult time. I hope that you will take a few moments to review this letter before visiting our sign up sheet.

As we begin this process, let me reiterate a few things that we should all bear in mind:

- **The Covid-19 Virus has not gone away, nor has it been defeated- that will only come with a safe and effective vaccine and people are no longer getting sick.**
- **Going to Church and attending Mass, while filled with grace and God's holy presence, does not in itself grant immunity to this Virus.**
- **The current dispensation from attending Mass here in the Diocese of Lansing continues until July 31.**
- **The internet and media is full of different and even contradictory opinions and reports- making it difficult to identify what is accurate and safe to comply with- please be assured that as a parish, we seek to take medical, legal and ecclesial guidance from the relevant authorities and that we will always have your best interests and safety at heart when making decisions.**
- **We continue to advise our seniors and those with underlying medical conditions to exercise great caution in all their activities and to stay at home until such time as they are comfortable being with others or have spoken with medical professionals.**
- **Seniors and others may wish to avail of weekday Masses when attendance is obviously lower.**
- **We will continue to live stream three weekend Masses for those who need to stay at home, wish to join us online and keep the Sabbath day holy!**
- **If you feel unwell in any way (fever, cough, sickness etc) –DO NOT attend Mass.**

Again all our decisions are subject to change so we invite you to keep an eye on our parish website- <https://www.stfrancisa2.com/>

Weekday Masses (Monday to Friday at 9:15am)

In accordance with diocesan instructions, attendance at our Mon –Fri 9:15am weekday Masses will be increased to **50 individuals**. This invitation is open to **registered parishioners of St. Francis only**- all others will be turned away until we can assess the response from our own community. Please be aware of the

needs of others to attend Mass and attentive to the instructions listed below. Please do not invite non parishioners to attend at this time. Here is the link for weekday sign up: <https://www.stfrancisa2.com/attend-a-mass>

Weekend Masses-(Sat 5pm and 7pm, Sun 10:30am and 12:30pm)

- Beginning May 30/31, attendance for each Sunday Mass will be increased to **150 registered parishioners**.
- Once again, we ask you to sign up online and to be attentive to the needs of others. Here is the link: <https://www.stfrancisa2.com/attend-a-mass>
- Registered parishioners are welcome to participate at the 10:30am Mass from their cars and can then receive Communion after the final blessing.
- A Communion station will be set up next to the main doors for those who wish to receive at that time. But we ask that you allow those in the Church to exit before coming forward.
- We will restore our 12:30pm Mass- this Mass will not be live streamed.
- Please note that all are welcome to sign up for the Spanish Mass.

Instructions for all Masses and other liturgies at SFA.

All those attending any Mass within the Church building are asked to follow these important instructions:

- You must be a **registered parishioner** to attend Mass at SFA.
- **Wear a Mask at all times**- for your own comfort and safety and that of others.
- It is advisable to **bring hand sanitizer** and to use it before and after Mass. It could also be used before receiving Holy Communion.
- Please **observe social distancing** at all times. Certain pews in the church have been taped off- ***please DO NOT sit in those pews!***
- After every Mass, our maintenance staff will clean/sanitize the Church.
- We discourage the use of restrooms- those in the Gathering Space will be available for emergencies only- all others will be locked.
- Families with young children should consider whether or not to attend Mass.
- A basket for the collection will be placed in the sanctuary at all Masses or you may continue to send your gifts to the parish [online](#) or by mail.
- As you leave Mass, please take your time, allowing others to leave in a safe manner. We ask you not congregate at the doors or in the Gathering Space.
- **Follow the Instructions** for the Distribution of Holy Communion-
 - When receiving Holy Communion, do not wear gloves; remove your mask after you receive. When receiving on the hand please stretch out your hand and keep it flat until the minister has placed the Host on it- this is to avoid any contact.

- Those who wish to receive on the tongue are asked to wait until Mass is over to receive- this is for the comfort and safety of all.
- Communion will be distributed under the Host only.
- As we begin into re-open, we have decided not to request the return of Ministers of Holy Communion or ushers- so we ask the following:
 - That all attending Mass be there at least **10-15 minutes** before Mass begins- allowing you to choose a comfortable place to sit and to hear any instructions.
 - Without Ministers, distribution of Holy Communion will take a little longer- please be patient and follow directions as you come forward.

2020 First Communion and Confirmation

At this time of the year we traditionally celebrate Confirmation and First Communion. This year the bishop has delegated permission to the pastors to confer Confirmation in their own parishes. These sacraments will **NOT** take place on the dates previously listed in May. We are currently working on a schedule for these sacraments- more on this later! If you have any questions please contact the Rel Ed Office at stfreled@stfrancisa2.org or 734-476-5640.

Easter Initiations

As we were unable to celebrate the Easter Sacraments of Initiation with our Elect and Candidates, this has now been rescheduled for the Vigil of Pentecost, May 30.

Reconciliation

Until further notice we will continue to hear confessions outside. Please see the parish website for details. <https://www.stfrancisa2.com/>

Thursday Eucharistic Adoration

Beginning Thurs, June 4 our hours of Adoration will continue until 6pm. If you would like to spend some time in Christ's presence, contact the Parish Office (734) 769-2550 to sign up.

Baptisms

Infant Baptisms will resume on Sundays at 3pm beginning June 7. To schedule a baptism, please contact the Associate Pastor at (734) 769-2550. For the foreseeable future, we are limiting each celebration to one **registered family** at a time. The requirements for preparation and letters of good standing for non-parishioner god-parents are still in effect. For more details see:

<https://www.stfrancisa2.com/sacraments/baptism/>

Weddings at SFA

By now we have heard from most of our wedding couples and most have opted to postpone their weddings to a later date. All others are asked to contact me directly.

Church Opening Hours

Beginning June 1, our Church will remain open for private prayer for the following times:

Mon to Friday 9am to 6pm

Saturday 10am to 8pm

Sunday 10am to 4pm

Holy Water at St. Francis

We have removed all the holy water fonts at the doors of the Church. The holy water in our baptismal font is free flowing and so is safe to use.

So there we are- some cautious steps in reopening our parish. Please remember that it will take some time before all our regular services and activities are



restored, so we ask you to bear with us and be patient.

Finally, I want you to know how blessed I am by your commitment and support to our parish family and by your prayers, words of encouragement and gifts. I also want to thank the members of my Pastoral Team and all involved in our many ministries and activities for continuing to work behind the scenes to assist and serve those in need.

So until we can all be together again- stay safe- remember this too shall pass and very soon we will be able to gather again to bask in the great mercy of God and to celebrate our identity as part of God's family. Until then blessings to all!

Fr. James

<https://www.stfrancisa2.com/>

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