

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

May 3, 2021

*Feast of Sts. Philip and James*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I hope and pray that this Easter season is filled with many blessings and much hope for you and all your loved ones. Thank you to all who followed our instructions during Holy Week and Easter Sunday and to all who contributed to our Kottappuram and Holy Land collections.

As we begin to emerge from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic- with more and more people being vaccinated and social restrictions being slowly lifted, I thought it would be opportune to share with you what we have in mind for our parish community. But as we move forward, we should all remember that we are not yet out of the woods and so we need to proceed cautiously and strategically. I encourage as many as possible to avail of vaccinations and for those unable to do so to continue to exercise extreme care.

As part of the Ann Arbor community, St. Francis is very aware of our responsibilities to proceed with that same care, especially as we begin the process of opening up our many ministries and other activities. We are currently working on a plan to meet the needs of our community and have spoken with health experts, reviewed the advice given by governmental and medical authorities and taken note of the guidance offered by our diocesan leadership. *So here is what we have decided so far!*

### **THE DISPENSATION EXPIRES!**

On May 22/23, the Solemnity of Pentecost, the current Church dispensation from attendance at Sunday Mass will expire. With that, we expect many more people to begin to return to weekend Masses. While I know that some, especially many of our seniors and those with underlying health issues, will be hesitant at first but I hope that after prayer and reflection, they will reflect on the importance of attending Sunday Mass. This is also a wonderful opportunity to invite anyone who has disconnected from our community to re-connect and to come home.

### **WEEKEND MASSES at St. FRANCIS**

- Beginning at Pentecost, we will no longer require parishioners to register online for weekend Masses.
- We will still require all parishioners to wear a mask over their mouth/nose, to use hand sanitizer and to exercise social distancing when at Mass.
- Hymnals will return to the pews, but we will continue to post the music/words on our parish website for use during Mass. We have also posted a link to the USCCB website where you will find the daily scripture readings.  
<https://bible.usccb.org/daily-bible-reading>
- We will continue to rope off alternate pews to allow for social distancing. But, if you are alone or with another person, we ask that you sit on the side aisles, allowing larger groups to occupy the center aisles.

- Communion will be distributed under one form using the four current stations and at the front door of the Church following the 10:30am Mass.
- For the moment, the 7am Sunday Mass will NOT return- we will review this at a later date.
- For details on our Sunday evening 5pm Mass, *please see below.*
- I have asked our Worship Coordinator to begin to schedule a second reader at weekend Masses so that we can restore our entrance procession with the Book of the Gospels.
- Fr. John will contact all our current altar servers and will set up a schedule to train new ones. We hope to have at least one server at each Mass to carry the Cross in and out and to ring the bells. If your child is a trained server, please encourage them to return to this important ministry.

### **MINISTRIES at St. FRANCIS**

Because of the pandemic many of our ministries are in need of new volunteers- could you help us with one of the following ministries- reader, Minister of Holy Communion or usher. For more information contact Sue at [swawrzaszek@stfrancisa2.org](mailto:swawrzaszek@stfrancisa2.org)

### **LIVE STRAMING MASSES at St. FRANCIS**

We are grateful to all who have volunteered to live stream our Masses during the pandemic. It is now time to return to our previous schedule of live streaming our 10:30am Sunday Mass only and our 12:30pm Sunday Mass when baptisms are listed. This means that we will no longer live stream our Saturday 5pm Mass. Weekday Rosary and Masses as well as occasional special Masses will continue to be live streamed for the present. Remember that all our live streamed liturgies are available on our website.

[www.stfrancisa2.com](http://www.stfrancisa2.com)

### **SUNDAY 5pm MASS**

To celebrate First Communion and Confirmations we have restored the following 5pm evening Masses to our schedule for a limited time. While the focus will be on the celebration of these Sacraments all but one\* of these Masses will be open to other parishioners. Please note that center pews will be reserved for the candidates. The 5pm Sunday Mass will return in the Fall.

**Sun, May 16** (*15 First Communion*s)

**Sun, May 23** (*10 First Communion*s)

**Sun, May 30** **NO MASS**

**Sun, June 6\*** (Confirmation with Bishop Boyea- (*Candidates + Families only*))

**Sun, June 13** (*11 First Communion*s and *14 Confirmation*s)

### **THE OCTAVE OF PENTECOST**

During the eight day period after Pentecost the Bishop has asked all in the Diocese to pray for the following special daily intentions:

**Day 1** For all who have died or lost loved ones due to the pandemic.

**Day 2** For all who have experienced social, emotional and educational disruption.

**Day 3** For each of us to receive the grace to live abundantly in Christ.

**Day 4** For those who have suffered and for those who care for the suffering.

**Day 5** For the grace to be missionary disciples who invite others to know Christ and his Church.

**Day 6** For all whose livelihoods have been affected by the pandemic.

**Day 7** For our seniors and all who have experienced isolation.

**Day 8** For a renewed participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

The Bishop has also gifted every registered family with a special candle to remind us that even in the darkness of this pandemic, we still have the light of Christ, our Risen Savior, to give us hope- please remember to pick up one of these blessed candles as you leave Mass on Pentecost.

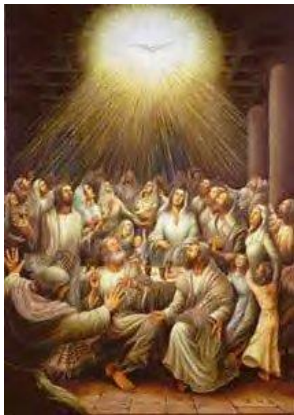
### **NEW PARISH MINISTRY CENTER CONSTRUCTION**

*Some excellent and exciting news!* After much planning and organization, construction of our new Parish Ministry Center will finally begin on June 10. We estimate that it will take about 12 months to complete but will involve some disruption to our community, especially in the area of parking. For regular progress updates please see the bulletin and webpage and if you have any questions regarding the project, contact the Owner's Rep-Dcn. Tom Arehart at [tarehart@stfrancisa2.org](mailto:tarehart@stfrancisa2.org)

For those who now wish to contribute to the project, please contact our Business Manager, Rob Kehn at [rkehrn@stfrancisa2.org](mailto:rkehrn@stfrancisa2.org). Remember no gift is too small but all gifts will help realize our goal. *We especially invite those who are new to our parish in the past three years to consider a gift to this important and long awaited project.*

### **SUNDAY GIVING at St. FRANCIS**

And speaking of gifts! I want to express my deep gratitude to all our parishioners who have continued to contribute to our Sunday Giving. Without your gifts, our ability to



continue to minister during this difficult time would have been severely impaired. For more details on Sunday Giving and other gifts to our parish, contact the Business Manager, Rob Kehn at [rkehrn@stfrancisa2.org](mailto:rkehrn@stfrancisa2.org) or visit our website at [www.stfrancisa2.com](http://www.stfrancisa2.com)

Friends, my hope is that this email will assure you that we are taking all necessary precautions as we emerge from the pandemic. But as I said above, we are still not there so I hope and pray that you will continue to exercise caution and care in all your activities and dealings, both here at the parish and elsewhere. As we move forward we will, where necessary, update these plans and keep you informed on a regular basis. Of course if you have any questions, you are welcome to contact me at 734 769 2550 or by email.

As we move to the great Feast of Pentecost may the Risen Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit continue to bless and guide our community and our families in the way of the Gospel.

*Fr. James*