

June 11,2020

Dear Parishioners of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal,

We pray that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy during this most challenging time. Know that you have been close in prayer during daily Mass. We also pray for the sick, those who have been called home to the Lord and our front-line health care and essential workers.

We will be reopening this weekend for weekend masses and regular daily masses. We are thankful as this time of closure has been painful and difficult. As we implement our re-opening plans, we must do so with prudence and caution, ensuring that we do everything possible to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

As you can expect, things will look a little different when we return to church. Yes, these are uncomfortable practices and they may seem overly restrictive - we understand that. However, to prevent us from having to close once again and to keep everyone as safe as possible, we must all do our part and make the best of this challenging situation.

One of the biggest challenges is that, to re-open, we must do so in phases where our capacity (# of people who can attend church) will be limited due to directives from the Province of Ontario's medical experts.

One key point that we would like to highlight is that the diocese, after consulting with the Chief Medical Officer for the Province of Ontario, is asking that all those (over the age of 3) who come to church wear a mask/face covering to mitigate the potential spread of the virus. They are highly recommended. Again, we recognize this is uncomfortable but it is out of care and love for our neighbour. Please follow this direction and bring a mask/face covering with you when you return to church.

Our joy of re-opening churches is measured with the restrictions that will be required. However, returning to sacramental life and gathering as a community is sustenance essential for our faith community during these trying days.

Please be patient as we are doing the best we can. It will be a learning experience for all of us.

Sincerely in Christ

See guidelines below.

## **Guidelines for Returning to Church – Resource for the Faithful**

As we are reopening, please be aware of the following guidelines. We recognize that they may be awkward/uncomfortable and contrary to our culture of hospitality and community. In working to foster a safe environment for all, we thank you in advance for your patience and co-operation.

Starting Friday, June 12 we will be taking reservations for all Weekend masses. Please call the office between 9:00am and noon or email the office. We are able to safely have 60 of our parishioners join us for each mass. We will need to know the family name, and how many members of the family. You will then be given a pew number.

### **Arriving at church**

- Maintain physical distancing at all times – 2 metres (6 feet) from others – in the parking lot, church entrance and in church itself.
- Upon arrival, put on mask/face covering before entering church for all those over the age of 3. (we have some disposable masks available, if you need any please let us know when you register and we will have them ready for your mass of choice. We are asking a donation of \$1.00 per mask, to help defray the costs.)
- We will be using the main door for entering and the side door for exiting only – it may not be the entrance you are familiar with. Follow the directions of the signs. When allotted numbers are reached no one else will be admitted.
- Sanitize hands upon entry and regularly wherever possible.
- Pews and aisles will be marked to note physical distancing requirements. Families and households living at the same residence may sit together; the same 2 metre (6 ft.) distance should be maintained concerning others. Follow direction of Volunteer for seating.
- Pews will be emptied of prayer books, hymnals, etc. Parish bulletins will not be published at this time.
- Holy Water fonts will be empty and not in use at this time.

### **Celebration of the Eucharist**

- Lectors will be kept to an absolute minimum during this period of time. Please do not enter the sacristy unless you have been asked to assist during Mass.
- There will be no singing at Mass until further notice.
- There will be no offertory procession or collection. Please leave donation in the designated basket upon entry/departure as directed.
- At the Sign of Peace, a nod or bow to others is appropriate.
- Masks/face coverings should be removed prior to reception of Holy Communion and put back on after consumption.
- During this time of pandemic and under the guidance of local medical health officials, the faithful are asked to receive Holy Communion in the hand by placing one on top of the other, allowing the Eucharistic Minister to safely place the Body of Christ in one's hand without contact.
- For communion flow ensure physical distancing at all times
- Follow direction provided for dismissal and departure – exits may be different than those you are accustomed to.
- Following Mass, please depart the church so that cleaning may commence. While it is our nature to congregate/socialize in the foyer or parking lot, we ask you NOT to do so at this time. Please maintain physical distancing.

### **General**

- Please use washrooms only if absolutely necessary.