



Holy Family Catholic Parish
St. Gabriel Church - St. Patrick Church
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May 26, 2020

Dear Parish Family Member,

PRAISE BE TO GOD! After more than two months of being apart, Archbishop Michael Jackels has announced that public Masses can resume May 30 and 31, the feast of Pentecost. We are thankful to God and all he has done for us! As we come together with gratitude, let us remember that our supreme concern as the Body of Christ must be the common good of all our members. This will require a level of sacrifice from each of us, which we undertake out of charity (love) for each other. Please read this letter carefully to find out more about what to expect as we resume Masses at Holy Family Parish.

- **As Masses resume, who should come?** Archbishop Jackels has suspended the obligation for attending Sunday Mass for the foreseeable future. **Those considered at high risk for more severe COVID-19 illness (or those who live with high-risk persons) should continue to stay home, including those over age 65 and anyone with underlying health conditions.** This also relates to those in ministry roles—no one in a ministry role should fall in these higher-risk categories. Also, anyone who feels anxious about returning to Mass should feel comfortable staying at home. We look forward to that happy day when our entire parish family will be able to gather together!
- Anyone who over the last 14 days has shown symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or has had a positive test for the virus should not attend Mass, nor should anyone in that person's household. The *Centers for Disease Control* (CDC) currently specifies these symptoms as including: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, and new loss of smell or taste.
- **Anyone who is even mildly ill should not attend Mass.**
- With the resumption of public Masses, **we will begin to livestream the liturgies, to allow those staying home the opportunity to gather with us virtually and spiritually. Spiritual Communion is real and powerful!** Find the livestream link at the parish website listed above.

Those attending Mass will encounter some significant differences. May the Holy Spirit guide us to encounter these changes with openness and readiness!

- **We will have fewer Masses at first** to ensure we can adequately disinfect in between Masses, while at the same time recognizing that at first there will be fewer folks able to attend. **Mass times will be 5:30pm Saturday and 9:30am Sunday only. Times as usual.**
- **Please bring a mask to wear at all times except when receiving Communion.** Those without masks will be offered one upon arrival. Beyond this being a requirement made by our Archbishop, wearing one also has the result of putting others at ease--always a good thing!
- **Please DO NOT wear protective gloves to Mass.** While they are often worn to seek to protect oneself, they actually can do more harm than good at Mass, as those who wear gloves tend not to use hand sanitizer while also touching multiple surfaces and spreading germs.
- **We will be using a minimum number of ministers,** with the goal of having things touched by the fewest number of people possible and abiding by social distancing. Ministers will receive more information about this. **ALTAR SERVERS WILL NOT BE USED AT THIS TIME.**

- **That said, we will need a number of people to help as liturgy hosts/ushers and folks to help with disinfecting.** Both of these roles will require training. Many of our current ministers in all roles fall within the high-risk categories, and we need younger folks to fill these roles. Please let the office know if you would be interested to help: contact Colleen 319-345-2006 dbq169sec@dbqarch.org
- As suggested by the Iowa Department of Public Health, we will have designated entrances. **To ENTER PLEASE USE FRONT MAIN ENTRANCE, TO EXIT PLEASE USE SIDE ENTRANCES.**
- Even though the baptismal font is emptied, you are encouraged to make the Sign of the Cross on yourself as you enter the church space as a reminder of our baptism.
- **You'll find hand sanitizer stations at all entrances.** Please sanitize your hands upon entering and when leaving the church. We also encourage you to bring your own hand sanitizer to use before receiving Communion.
- **Seating will respect social distancing.** Only those in the same household should sit together. Many pews will be marked to remain empty, and individuals or households will sit at the ends of the open pews. A liturgy host/usher will help you find your seat, **beginning with the front of the church.** This means that you may not be able to sit in your usual pew. Let's take this opportunity to see the Mass from a new point of view! **If needed, we will look for the best way to handle overflow.**
- **Be mindful of social distancing yourself at all times:** before, during, and after Mass. Please remain at least 6 feet from anyone not in your household whenever possible. Physical contact must be eliminated as much as possible for now. This means:
 - **Recite the *Our Father* without holding the hands of others.**
 - **The Sign of Peace will be omitted (at first).**
 - **Receive the Sacred Host in a plainly open hand only (no reception on the tongue).**
- **The Breaking Bread missalettes have been removed for now.**
- Our financial offering during the preparation of gifts joins the bread and wine as a symbol of returning the work of our hands to God, who has given us everything and consecrates our offering. **Short-term, we will not have the usual collection. There will be a basket at each entrance, where you can place your offering as you enter/leave.** This is a great time to consider electronic tithing (EFT) or online giving. More information about online giving is available at the parish office.
- **Holy Communion will be received at your pew. Father David and three EM's will use the empty pews to travel to each communicant.** Please remain standing until you receive. Again, please receive Holy Communion on a plainly open hand.
- **Sung music, especially by the assembly, will be kept to a minimum.** Studies show that forceful speaking or singing expands the risk of dispersion of a virus. While we look forward to that time when we can have spirited singing again, for now please continue your full, conscious, and active participation inwardly as you hear instrumental music.
- **After Mass, the assembly will be excused by pew,** similar to the practice at a wedding or funeral, to allow for safe distancing and to avoid congestion at the exits. **As during the entire pandemic, this is another chance to grow in the VIRTUE of PATIENCE!**

Your patience and flexibility will go a long way, as we all make our way in this new territory. Together, we pray: *Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your spirit, and we shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth.*

Peace in Christ,
Rev. David G. Kucera
 Pastor, Holy Family Parish