



June 11, 2020

My dearest sisters and brothers,

It is with great joy that St. Joseph Catholic Church opens its doors and welcomes parishioners back to church!

Our re-opening leadership team and staff have been working diligently together to execute the plan for re-opening as outlined by the Diocese of Joliet. We have been granted permission by the diocese to welcome people back into the church for Mass, prayer and the sacraments. While this is good news we ask that you recognize that this is still a gradual re-opening that will need patience and understanding from everyone, as our priority is the safety and well-being of all who enter our church and our buildings.

With that being said, we are taking the necessary precautions consistent with the advice of public health authorities. Parishioners and guests should understand that they assume the risk of contracting COVID-19 anytime they enter a public space since such precautions do not eliminate the risk of infection. We encourage those who are part of the “vulnerable population” with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer treatment patients, those 65 and older, to consider the risks for your own wellbeing before you come back to the Church. Please come back only when you are ready. The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days has been lifted by Bishop Pates and will continue to be lifted until further notice. Mass from St. Joseph Catholic Church will continue to be offered indefinitely on-line and shared on our parish website and Facebook.

Before we open our doors we want to let you know what to expect when you arrive. Because our seating is limited to only 50 people, it is necessary for you to make a reservation before you can attend Mass. You can access the reservation system (SignUpGenius) on our website at www.stjosephmanteno.com. If you do not have access to the internet you can call the parish office Monday thru Friday from 9am until noon to make a reservation.

When you arrive at our church, anyone older than 2 years of age will be required to wear a face covering that covers both the nose and the mouth. You must bring your own face mask and wear it the entire time you are here with the exception of when you receive Holy Communion. We also ask that you practice social distancing and maintain a distance of 6 feet from others. The doors of the church will be opened 30 minutes prior to the start of Mass. We ask that you do not attempt to enter the church until the doors have been propped open by our hospitality ministers. You will enter the church only thru the center front doors. All the other doors will remain closed and will be marked exit only. Please arrive no later than 15 minutes before the start of Mass. This will allow enough time for our hospitality ministers to get you checked in and seated in the church.

Facebook: [StJosephCatholicChurchManteno](https://www.facebook.com/StJosephCatholicChurchManteno)

Phone: 815-468-3403

Email: stjoemanteno@sbcglobal.net

www.stjosephmanteno.com

As you check in a member of our hospitality ministry will look for your name on the reservation list, ask if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 and will take your temperature. Once you have been checked in you will be asked to sanitize your hands. One of our hospitality ministers will now take you to your seat. We will be filling the church from the front to the back, so unfortunately you will not be able to sit in your favorite seat. You will notice that every other pew is closed and that the open pews have markings on them. This is to help our hospitality ministers seat everyone so that we can maintain the guidelines of social distancing. Once you are seated we ask that you do not get up to switch seats. All hymnals have been removed from the pews. There is to be no physical contact with other households during the sign of peace and the Lord's prayer. We will not be passing the collection baskets so there will be donation boxes for you to place your offering in as you enter or leave the church. We greatly encourage you to sign up for our online giving found on our website.

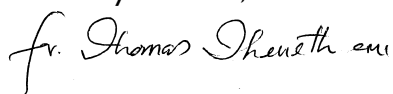
There are a couple of changes regarding the reception of Holy Communion. During the Communion Rite Father will be the only one to receive Communion at that time. He will then purify the vessels and then return to his chair for the final blessing. Holy Communion will be distributed immediately following Mass. The hospitality ministers will dismiss you starting with the back row, one row at a time. Please stay in your seat until your row is dismissed. Be sure to take all of your belongings with you when you leave. The Communion Ministers will be stationed in the back of the church and will give you Holy Communion as you leave the church. Be sure to maintain a distance of 6' when you are in the aisle by standing on the floor markings. Before you receive Holy Communion we ask that you use the hand sanitizer that will be available in the aisle. Please leave your mask on when you are in front of the Eucharistic Minister, receive Communion in your fully opened hands, step aside 6' to the marking on the floor, remove one side of your mask and then receive the precious Body of Christ. After you receive the Eucharist place your mask back on and make your way out of the church. We ask that you do not gather after Mass. The church and washrooms must be cleaned and sanitized for the next service.

I know that this is a very different experience for all of us. We have all had some practice with social distancing at local stores and doctors' offices. Now is our time to get together and re-energize our Parish community with in-person worship. Our collective patience, willingness to help and the care we take to reopen is a demonstration of our unity and love for one another.

May God grant you His peace during this difficult time and may He manifest His love and presence to you in abundant ways.

We look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Thomas Theneth CMI".

Fr. Thomas Theneth CMI
Pastor