

June 4, 2021



Dear Parishioners,

On May 13<sup>th</sup> the Bishops of Ohio announced that the general obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation will be reinstated effective this weekend. Also, with the lifting of many of the State mandates, Bishop Brennan has given pastors further instructions going forward in the Diocese of Columbus. A letter from the Bishop to the faithful will be read at all Masses this weekend and will be made available on our parish website.

Here are some important points from the latest information to keep in mind as we move forward:

- 1) Facial Coverings and Social Distancing are to continue being observed **ONLY**:
  - a. If an individual is uncomfortable being in an environment where others are not masked
  - b. If an individual is not fully vaccinated, wearing of masks and distancing are recommended.
- 2) For Masses, we will now be able to have:
  - a. Offertory Procession
  - b. Sign of Peace (please refer to the Bishop's Letter for this weekend)
  - c. Altar Servers are able to return to service
  - d. Holy Water has been returned to the entrances of the church
  - e. Live Streaming of the Sunday 10:30am Mass will continue
- 3) The Precious Blood will not be offered for the foreseeable future (See Bishop's Letter)
- 4) Sanitizing of surfaces is no longer required after masses or in other areas of the parish after use. The use of hand sanitizer is still encouraged and will be provided as we have been.
- 5) As previously stated, the parish facilities will once again be made available to parish organizations by scheduling with the parish office as before the pandemic.
- 6) Funeral luncheons, Friendship Sunday, and other social gatherings with food offerings will be permitted with some food handling protocols still in effect.
- 7) Access to the church during the day for personal prayer and visits will be available this summer as before. Please note that the church will be locked as usual by 9:00pm on weekdays, and after the last Mass on Saturdays and Sundays. For the safety of our school children during the school, this availability will change accordingly and will be announced at the appropriate time.

8) Exposition and Adoration in the Adoration Chapel is being phased back.

As has been announced, our Parochial Vicar, Fr. Thomas Herge has been appointed pastor of the Jackson-Vinton County Consortium of Parishes and will begin there on July 13<sup>th</sup>. We will not be receiving a priest to replace him. I have been considering adjustments in the event that this would be the case, most especially with the parish Mass schedule. For now, we will continue for a time with the current Mass schedule observed during the pandemic. It will not make sense for us to move things back to a pre-pandemic Mass schedule, only to change it again in the next month or so. I will communicate to the parish when those decisions are completed and if and when they will take effect. In the meantime, anyone desiring to attend a weekday Mass at times other than the 6:30am Mass offered here, I will humbly suggest that Our Lady of Peace (which is less than a mile South on High Street) has weekday Masses on Tuesday at 5:30pm and Wednesday – Friday at 8:30am.

Regarding a farewell for Fr. Herge, after discussing this with him, we are going to simply opt to provide an opportunity after each Mass on the weekend of July 10-11 for parishioners to offer their gratitude and to send him off with our prayers. A gift table will be set up for anyone who would like to offer him a parting gift.

I want to thank everyone, once again, for assisting with our efforts to accommodate the requirements made during the pandemic. Our parish staff took on the tasks of implementing adaptations to best maintain our liturgical celebrations and day to day operations with a great sense of teamwork. Parish volunteers gave of themselves to assist in a wide variety of ways, most especially with the care given to make the church environment sanitized and safe. Our very heroic teachers, staff and administration of St. Michael School worked very hard together to make in person classes a reality. Many parish organizations also had to make sacrifices to continue to actively participate in the life of the parish and school. I appreciate so much the sense of community and concern shown by each of you for others. God bless you all!

St. Michael the Archangel, pray for us!

In Christ,

Fr. Anthony A. Dinovo, Jr.  
Pastor