

May 18, 2020

I want to share my current thoughts on resuming some manner of Sunday Liturgy because other parishes have already resumed some manner of Sunday Liturgy.

I do not want to be responsible for deciding who can come and who cannot, so the idea of invitations to Mass is not an option.

What is an option is some kind of reservation process for particular Masses at particular times with names selected in a blind draw until all seats are filled for any particular Mass.

This process would leave it up to people over the age of 65 to decide for themselves if this would be acceptable to Bishop Mc Clory as that age limitation may be a firm policy of this diocese.

That being said using the formula required by the diocese we would have somewhere in the vicinity of 80 seats depending on whether or not and how we configure the movable seating around the Baptismal Font.

We could, pending the bishop's approval, increase the number of Masses we have on weekends because Father Leo has agreed to help us but his availability as the summer goes on will depend on whether or not the school where he teaches reopens in the fall.

Many of you have suggested an outside parking lot Mass with people remaining in their cars which would provide a most secure environment for those over 65, and while that holds some promise it is not as easy as it might look.

We would have to do a reservation process to ensure that we could assign parking places and maintain social distancing and traffic safety.

It could not be just open to drive in. There would be capacity limits and the actual numbers are being developed but it will not be a full parking lot by any means.

Karin Jurek is working with our sound system people to learn about FM broadcasting so you would hear through the radios in your car.

It could not be “bring a lawn chair and sit outside” because we do not want to have anyone assume or be given the role to police the area maintaining social distancing and mask wearing which will be required outside of the car which brings me to a major concern of mine.

I do not want anyone treated like a number or a seat assignment, but we will have to maintain proper distancing inside or outside without any kind of bar bouncer presence.

I do not want the inside of the church draped in yellow crime scene tape or black plastic garbage bags tied to pews or anything else.

There will be no lavatory facilities or drinking water available. No containers of anything can be brought into the church and masks will have to be worn at all times.

A potential problem that we are working on for Mass inside the church is the sanitizing of fabric upholstered pews and chairs. There are solutions, but we need to make certain that we will have those products available to us should this become a long-term practice.

I am maintaining an ongoing conversation with recognized public health officials who all concur that it is too soon to reopen too much too fast as we are doing because so many factors about this virus remain unknown.

I have no arbitrary dates in mind but by Memorial Day and the week after we should begin to see evidence that gives more reliable data as to how to proceed.

This is not easy, certainly not as easy as some think, this is not a political issue, but a human issue, the folks who want to make this a kind of partisan issue missed the civics class where they talked about the responsibilities of citizenship along side the rights and privileges of citizenship.

I understand the economic issues are foreboding and formidable and awful for many but historically pandemics are ruthlessly uninterested in being respectful of anyone or anything but replicating and mutating to stay alive.

We have got to outsmart the virus because we cannot run from it or hide from it only beat it with wisdom and knowledge and hard work and patience.

Let us pray that God will bless our world this week with wisdom and knowledge and hard work and patience.

As always, you do not have to agree with me but these policies and procedures are not mine to take or leave and anything we do will require the approval of the bishop.

Peace.