

Dear Friends,

Effective immediately there are no reservations required for any Sunday Masses but remember that parish property is private property and the property owner is the Bishop of Gary and that he sets the requirements for access and use and that we do our best to implement them.

We will be resuming the 8:30 Mass on Sunday, May 2, 2021, as part of our effort to be of service to those who want to attend Sunday Mass in person and to try and restore an atmosphere of joy and reverence to our Sunday Liturgies.

The atmosphere that has developed around the Sunday Liturgies is not the atmosphere that we are used to nor is it the atmosphere that I want to have when we come together to celebrate Mass.

The requirements placed on us to allow for in person celebrations of Sunday Mass are designed to try and keep people not only alive but safe and healthy.

Public health professionals and the leadership of our diocese in all good faith have developed protocols that to the best of their knowledge are essential to promoting the welfare and good health of ALL people.

No protocol or recommendation relative to the evolving knowledge of the Coronavirus over the course of the last year has been taken lightly and there is ample evidence in our community that these protocols have worked and do keep people safe and healthy and alive.

One of the most important protocols is maintaining distances from one another when inside with large numbers of people such as at Sunday Masses.

Many of you do not appear to understand that or, sadly, accept that, so we must try to do that for you and strongly require the recommended social distance that you do not observe when we invite you to enter and invite you to be seated in a specific place to maximize our capacity.

Trust me, that is not a pleasant task.

Likewise, it seems that some have adopted the attitude that because they are vaccinated, they have no worries and no obligations to take the social distancing and mask requirements seriously. That is a foolhardy and certainly not a Christian response given that our knowledge of the Coronavirus is evolving.

While I would love to be proven wrong, I do not think that there is any end in sight to the limitations and obstacles posed by new variants of the Covid virus, transmission unknowns, vaccine efficacies, and any number of issues yet to be revealed.

I believe that we are in this mode of vigilance for the foreseeable future.

Some parishes have hired police to be present to ensure public safety, I find that an unacceptable course of action given what we are gathering to do.

The reservation system failed because people did not get the fact that if they could not make a reservation that meant that all the reservations were taken, so they just showed up which created a whole new set of problems.

The masks and the music preludes made it difficult to be heard so the name checkers were face to face with people trying to hear and check names which was in direct contradiction to the requirements of social distancing.

So, going forward we will admit people on a first come first seated basis with exceptions for younger families who will be making First Communions and families who have had a death since the pandemic who prearrange to attend Mass together.

I hope no one will find fault with that.

When the capacity is reached at about 150 (family units living together affect the exact number) the doors will be shut.

Please follow all the directions that you might be asked to follow, please treat the volunteers who might interact with you respectfully, please arrive, and leave, with a good and generous heart.

Please, please try to lose any sense of entitlement that you may cling to behind when you come to Mass, and you might begin to get a sense of the freedom that resurrection brings and learn to relax into the love of Christ.

Peace,
Father Niblick