



Blessed Trinity Catholic Church

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Frankenmuth, MI 48734
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May 18, 2020

My Dear Friends,

We've received word from Bishop Gruss that parishes are to begin having weekend Mass starting on Saturday, May 30. This is a moment we've long awaited, but things will be *very* different for a while.

Churches are opening up in phases. We're currently in PHASE ONE. Masses are live-streamed while parishes get information out to parishioners and prepare for the weeks ahead. Baptisms are private, with fewer than 10 people. Weddings and funerals must have only 10 people present as well. Social distancing must occur.

In PHASE TWO public daily Masses start up again, with restricted attendance and other changes. Parishes ready for this phase may begin daily Masses on May 25. However, here at Blessed Trinity our daily Mass Chapel would make the Bishop's requirement of social distancing impossible to carry out. By the time you receive this, I will have met with the staff to discuss how to put into practice what is expected of us at Mass (see other side). It might be that we will have weekend Masses figured out first and implement daily Mass afterwards.

In PHASE THREE public weekend Masses start up again on Saturday May 30. We will start with only two weekend Masses: one on Saturday and one on Sunday. The large-scale cleaning required before each liturgy (and the number of areas involved) makes having two Sunday morning Masses at our parish virtually undoable, at least for now. Mass on Saturday remains at 5:00 p.m. The Sunday Mass time has not yet been decided, but we will let you know as soon as possible.

In PHASE FOUR weekend Masses resume at full capacity, with a return to Catholic life in parishes just as it was before the pandemic. Naturally, when the Diocese will be ready for this final stage is completely unknown and depends entirely on factors which we cannot control.

Things to keep in mind:

- The Bishop has removed the obligation to attend Mass for all Catholics in the Diocese *through the end of August, 2020.*
- Those over 65 who have a health condition, or who have a cough of any sort, or are feeling sick to any degree, or are caring for the sick in any way, are at higher risk of contracting the virus and should not come to church.
- All people over 2 years old must wear masks upon entering the church until they leave, except when receiving Communion.

(OVER)

Changes at weekend Masses:

- ✓ Certain rows will be roped off, and only 125 people (25% of our capacity) will be allowed inside the building. This will be strictly enforced.
- ✓ Except for families, people must sit 6 feet apart.
- ✓ Tape will be on the Communion aisles to indicate proper spacing.
- ✓ The daily Mass Chapel will be kept closed and locked.
- ✓ Separate worship aids will be used for each Mass.
- ✓ Altar servers will not be needed, and choirs are not allowed.
- ✓ Staff members will take care of setting up everything for Mass, as well as clean-up after Mass. This will reduce the number of people in the sacristy.
- ✓ The Book of the Gospels will not be carried in.
- ✓ Collection baskets will not be passed among the people. Baskets for offering envelopes will be located conveniently in the church.
- ✓ The offertory procession (bringing up the gifts) will be omitted.
- ✓ There will be no Sign of Peace exchanged during Mass.
- ✓ The priest and those who help to distribute Communion must wear masks while they give the Body of Christ to those in church.
- ✓ A stand will be placed at every Communion station along with a bottle of hand sanitizer. People are asked not to receive the Body of Christ on the tongue but in the hand only. If the person distributing Communion ends up accidentally touching someone else's hands, the Communion minister must use the hand sanitizer before distributing to the next person.
- ✓ People must remove any face coverings or gloves while receiving Communion.
- ✓ The announcements and final blessing occur BEFORE people receive Communion. After someone receives Communion, they simply leave church. This guarantees a slow trickle of people leaving instead of everyone at once.

Confirmation and First Communion may take place in parishes if the children have completed their Sacramental preparation. Here at Blessed Trinity our candidates for these Sacraments still have more preparation to do, but the Bishop will be sending us additional instructions for these Sacraments.

Finally, the Bishop is asking parishes to continue to live-stream Masses if possible, since many people will be unable to come to church for the time being.

As things progress, we'll certainly continue to update you. May the Risen Lord see us safely through this difficult time.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Petch". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.