



THE PARISH OF ST. KATHARINE DREXEL

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2 June 2020

Dear Friends,

You may have heard by now that we were given permission by Bishop Matano to resume the public celebration of Mass, as long as we follow certain sanitary and social distancing guidelines. We received these instructions on May 21.

The most difficult aspect of this “reopening” is that **Mass attendance will be limited to 10 people, including the priest.** This obviously creates a difficult situation for mass attendance. Given such considerations, as well as the protocols for cleaning and disinfecting the pews that have been put in place, we are requesting that our Parishioners comply with the limitations on occupancy that we are allowed both now with the 9 person limit and in the future with greater occupancy. **We need to be in compliance, and we ask that you self-monitor the situation.** If the church is full to the limited capacity, we ask that you come back another day. Parishioners who wish to come to daily Mass may organize amongst themselves as to who comes to Mass and when, so as to maintain the capacity limit.

We will initially start with our regular schedule of weekday Masses. **We intend to begin public weekday Masses on Monday, June 8, 2020.** Please continue to look for more information as the situation develops.

It is important to know that “**the obligation of a Catholic to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended and we have uniformly encouraged those most at risk to stay home**” (Bishop Matano, *Memorandum*, May 21, 2020).

We want to stress that for the safety of all, if you are experiencing signs of sickness, **PLEASE** do not attend Mass.

The following guidelines will be in place for all public Masses for the foreseeable future:

- All those who enter the church **MUST** be wearing a facemask. You must come wearing one.
- Everyone must sanitize his or her hands upon entrance to the church. Hand sanitizer will be provided at the entrances.
- Observe social distancing measures. Pews in each church will be clearly marked as to where people may sit. A family may sit together, but please be six (6) feet apart from the next person or family.
- The public space must be sanitized after each Mass in preparation for the next.

Rev. Symon Peter Ntaiya
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Additional measures will also be taken to limit contamination. “Cry rooms” and other ancillary rooms will be closed, doors will be propped open to allow entry and exit without touching, and we will have only one single restroom available to limit the amount of cleaning necessary. There will be no social gatherings after Mass. Martha Ministry is suspended at this time and we are awaiting guidance on the restart of any other programming the church offers.

Many are also wondering how Holy Communion will be distributed, given the close contact between the priest and the people at that time. The following are the relevant guidelines for Mass and for the reception of Holy Communion:

- The offertory procession is to be omitted.
- The holding of hands during the Lord’s Prayer, not part of the *Roman Rite*, is strictly forbidden.
- The invitation to exchange a sign of peace is omitted.
- The priest will wear a mask during the distribution of Holy Communion, whether this occurs during Mass or outside of Mass.
- Reception of Holy Communion on the tongue remains permissible, as required by the liturgical law of the Church, with the admonition that the faithful should be strongly encouraged to receive Communion in the hand for the duration of the pandemic. Those wishing to receive on the tongue will be asked to come up last in the procession line.
- There will be only one station for distributing Holy Communion in the Sacred Host. The Precious Blood is not offered, nor are the faithful to receive by intinction.

Please know that all of you remain in our prayers each day especially at the altar as we continue to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We greatly look forward to the day we can worship together again in our churches. In the meantime, know that we are always available for you.

Father Symon Peter Ntaiyia
Pastor

Father Anthony Amato
Parochial Vicar