

NOTE FROM FR. JOHN

May 26, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

As you probably know by now, the diocese has issued its official guidelines and timetable (5 phases) for reopening churches. Our parish church has been open from day one, March 14th, for prayer and reflection. As I reviewed the newly-issued protocols, many have already been put into place at the Magdalene (no kiss of peace by handshake, no reception of communion by the chalice, empty holy water fonts, hand sanitizer for Eucharistic ministers, etc.). Other diocesan guidelines for mass are new during the course of this pandemic: the use of altar servers is suspended; full choirs are eliminated, but one or two cantors are permitted; the priest is not to wear mask/gloves during the celebration of mass; the priest/minister is not to place communion in a the gloved hand of a parishioner: the obligation to physically attend mass remains suspended; the possibility of receiving communion without mass is being explored; physical separation is to be maintained, etc. However, other protocols require major change on our part. Let me be clear: These changes are requested by the diocese. However, if these changes diminish our parish cohesiveness or have a deleterious effect on parishioner participation, we reserve the right to rethink the implementation of these proposals. ***Before we implement the next three proposals I welcome your feedback first. The diocese requests the following:***

- (1) The elimination of the missalettes which are handled by many different people at mass. Since it is obvious that we cannot sanitize each missalette after each mass, the diocese would prefer, if I understand it correctly, they be eliminated, to avoid the possible transmission of the virus. If we were to do this, we would need to print a sheet of music each week (mindful of copyright laws) to put in the hands of parishioners. New sheets of music would be provided for each mass so that the same sheet of music is not used by more than one person. After each mass the sheets would be collected and disposed. Also, without the printed readings, lectors will be required to be solicitous of those who are hard of hearing. Eliminating the missalette will also deprive those who learn primarily by reading than listening from absorbing the message of scripture. Another option, which I

favor, would be for each parishioner to have their own missalette to bring to church each week. You can take a missalette home and make it yours. **To implement the diocesan proposal for the elimination of misallettes, requires a major change for us. Another possibility: either wear gloves in handling the missalette or carry hand sanitizer to use both before and after handling the missalette. Taking home a missalette and making it yours may be the best option. Please let me know what option seems best.**

- (2) Marking off pews for single people, couples, families, while maintaining no more than 25% of occupancy at any mass. This will not be easy. Given our weekly attendance of roughly 350 parishioners, we would need 7 masses on a weekend to accommodate this proposal. **No way is this happening!!** We are still working on the occupancy limitations. Right now there is no way of knowing how long attendance limitations will be in effect. All the more reason for live streaming at least one mass. Speaking of live streaming, last weekend's wedding was live streamed by family members using their cell phones, since the groom's parents could not be present due to distance. As they say: "Necessity is the mother of invention."
- (3) The elimination of the parish bulletin. Why? Because of human handling, the diocese requests that they not be distributed. Between our website and flocknotes we can effectively communicate with all parishioners and post news, announcements, mass intentions, etc. To do this most effectively **We Need Your Email Address.** I will provide one flocknote a week. The flocknote will also be posted on our website the following weekend. We can post the weekly mass intentions on the church bulletin boards. The elimination of the bulletin will need some tweaking in the coming months and will be re-evaluated in the New Year. Let me know what you think.
- (4) While we are exploring hand sanitizing stations at the church entrances, let common sense prevail: if you are sick, stay home; wear a mask in church; carry hand sanitizer; if you feel more secure wearing gloves, wear them.
- (5) The use of the parish hall will be suspended because of social distancing. As a consequence, our monthly brunches will be on hold until next year.
- (6) Cardinal's Appeal update: Goal: \$48,000; pledged, \$35,166. Thank you for your generosity to the parish and the Appeal.

(7) As noted in a previously issued flocknote, I anticipate a busy fall. Three weddings have been scheduled/re-scheduled for September. In addition, we need to accommodate memorial services for those who were buried without a funeral mass. Also, a Saturday morning mass will be set aside for the mass intentions that could not be honored due to the pandemic. Delayed baptisms must be rescheduled. First Communion and Confirmation dates need to be set, provided that schools are in session.

To my knowledge, our parishioners are weathering this pandemic disruption well. Please remain safe. Remember the needs of our local food pantry.

(8) Next week is Pentecost, marking the conclusion of the Easter Season. Let the words of Jesus to his disciples in St. John's Gospel comfort us: "Peace be with you. Receive the Holy Spirit."

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS: Religious Education Forms are in the mail. Please fill them out and return them by June 15, 2020. Forms for new students to our program can be found on-line on our website or in the back of the church. For information call Dotty Meehan at 914-552-7628 or dotmeehan@aol.com.

Prayer for an Act of Spiritual Communion

**My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.**

CARDINAL'S STEWARDSHIP APPEAL 2020: As of 5/29//2020

Goal	Pledged	# of Donors	Donor Goal
\$48,000	\$36,016	86	130

To make your gift online, visit cardinalsappeal.org.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: Reminder: Please do not tape or staple the envelopes. Just seal them. The tape or staple causes problems with D. P. Murphy when they calculate the envelopes. Thank you so much!

ANYONE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE? Please contact rectory at 914-631-0529 if you need help during this difficult time (food shopping, etc.).