

PASTOR'S UPDATE TO PARISHIONERS – W (5/29/20)

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PASTORAL MESSAGE TO PARISHIONERS FROM FR. FERGUSON

Greetings in the Lord!

Come Holy Spirit! As we approach the Solemnity of Pentecost this weekend, and therefore the conclusion of the Easter Season, we give thanks to God that we are finally able to “re-open” our public Masses, albeit with many precautions and adjustments!

We ask the Holy Spirit to come upon all of us as Hardin County Catholics to renew our commitment to the Lord as present-day disciples, whether we are able to come physically to Mass or still need to stay home. May this weekend, wherever we may be, be a hopeful sign of an eventual return to a more “normal” way of living.

Today's “UPDATE – W” includes some important reminders, especially as we prepare for our “re-opening” of public Masses this coming weekend. PLEASE READ THE IMPORTANT GUIDELINES BELOW BEFORE COMING ON-SITE TO MASS.

Our Mother Mary, Patron of our Hardin County Parishes, Pray for Us.

- Fr. Bill Ferguson, Pastor

START OF WEEKEND MASSES – IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

BASIC INFORMATION:

1. This weekend, of course, is the first weekend of public Masses, as allowed by our Ohio Bishops. Please note that we will have the usual “summer” cluster Mass schedule:
Kenton: Sat 4:00 pm and Sun 9:00 am
Ada: Sat 5:30 pm and Sun 11:00 pm (remember that last year we had already decided that the 8:30 Mass would only be a “school year” Mass)
2. The usual **Saturday Confessions will not take place**; they will continue in the social-distanced format on Wednesdays and Sundays on a rotational basis as described in past updates. See the section below for an updated schedule.
3. Remember that the **obligation to come to Mass is dispensed until September 13** by the Ohio Bishops. You are not under any requirement to come if you do not feel comfortable in doing so. We will therefore continue to offer Livestreaming (on a rotational-location basis, beginning with Kenton this weekend at 9:00 am). See the Livestream section below for more information.

BEFORE COMING TO MASS:

1. According to the Diocese, those who are in **“high risk” demographics** or who have symptoms “are especially cautioned to avoid public gatherings, including Mass”. Please use your discretion and consult with a physician as needed.
2. **Masks:** As you noted in Bishop’s Guidelines, **all people in the pews on-site for Mass need to wear some sort of face covering**. The only exceptions are 1) those under age two, 2) when individuals are serving a liturgical role in the sanctuary itself, or 3) when you come up for Holy Communion. I know it is awkward and unpleasant to wear masks, but please cooperate with this directive of our Bishop. If you happen to forget to bring one, we will have a very limited supply of extra masks in the narthex of each church.
3. Do **“hand hygiene” at home** before coming.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU COME ON-SITE

1. Please make sure you **always maintain safe distance from everyone else** – 6 feet apart. I know it will be exciting to see everyone else after so long apart, but please refrain from the urge to run up and hug others, and please keep an eye on your children to make sure they don’t do the same.
2. There will be **sanitizer** everywhere; please take a squirt when entering and when leaving.
3. Based on Bishop’s Guidelines about social distancing, we have had to **close off every other pew** for social-distanced seating, and to space chairs apart in our “overflow” areas at each parish. We will be not be able to use every seat. Seating will be more limited than before. It may take us a couple of weeks to feel out how many people show up and if we need to create “overflow” seating somewhere. Or we may need to suggest that only a couple of “reps” from a larger family come to Mass each week on a “rotational” basis. Please be patient with this process!
4. **FAMILY MEMBERS CAN SIT TOGETHER** within a pew.
5. **INDIVIDUALS MUST SIT 6’ APART OR FROM THE NEAREST FAMILY**. On a practical level, this means that only 2 individuals are able to sit in an Ada pew or row of chairs, and only 3 individuals can sit in a Kenton pew.
6. Based on Bishop’s Guidelines, we had to **remove hymnals and missalettes** and all other “papers” from the pews, to reduce surfaces to contaminate.

7. You are **not expected to try to sing** while wearing your masks; in fact, it is discouraged so as to reduce the potential spread of air-borne germs. The cantor and clergy will sing the hymns and responses for you.
8. There will be **no Offertory Procession** or the use of the **Sign of Peace** (shaking hands).
9. But a **collection** (using the long-handled baskets) will still take place.
10. Any **bulletins** that may be made available will only be passed out at the END OF MASS, so that they can be taken directly home and not handled in the pews.
11. Prior to each Mass these next couple of weeks, I will take a moment to announce some reminders about these provisions, and to ensure that everyone is properly seated (....does that make me an airline steward?but I won't take drink orders....)

HOLY COMMUNION

1. Based on **Bishop Brennan's directives and preferences**, we will still offer Holy Communion during Mass itself, but with the following points:
2. The **Precious Blood** will not be distributed except to Dcn. Mike or to our Instituted Acolyte.
3. We will have only **one line for Communion** (not two) in the aisle.
4. Therefore, and to reduce numbers in the sanctuary, we will **not need any EOMHC's**.
5. When you come for Communion, please maintain a **6-foot distance** between people in the aisle. There will be tape markings on the floor to assist.
6. **Remove your mask** before coming for Communion, according to guidance given by Bishop.
7. Bishop strongly prefers people to receive Communion "**in the hand**" to reduce potential contact with saliva, etc.
8. You should not wear gloves to receive Communion.
9. **Note for Ada:** Those seated in the Social Hall should REMAIN IN THE HALL for Communion; the clergy will come to you, which sometimes may have to occur after the main body has been tended to. DO NOT migrate into the main body of the church to join its Communion line.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

1. **After each Mass**, we will need a **few volunteers** to stay for a few minutes **to help sanitize** the pews that were used, handles, knobs, etc). Please consider helping with this. We will have gloves and cleaning supplies and cloths available.
2. We **may need** extra volunteers for **ushers** at some Masses to help with the Collection, depending on whether our regular ushers feel comfortable with coming to a given Mass. Please be alert and step forward if no one seems to be taking up the Collection.

NOTES FOR LITURGICAL VOLUNTEERS

1. Bishop wants to keep people in the sanctuary to a minimum. As such, we will have only one lector and one server for a Mass, in addition to the musicians.
2. **Lectors:** You are welcome to sit in a designated "Lector Chair" in the sanctuary between the readings. Be prepared to also do the Psalm on the occasions when we may not have a Cantor.
3. **Servers:** Your roles will be simplified for Masses, and I will give you instructions before Mass begins. Specifically, you do not need to "hold the Sacramentary" for the priest, and you will not need to set up the altar (Deacon or Acolyte will do that), nor the "washing of hands". You will mainly assist with the Processional/Recessional Cross, the "bells", and helping with the clearing of the altar.
4. **EOMHC's** – as noted above, we will not need any EOMHC's since we will have only 1 (or Ada's 2) Communion locations. We will nearly always have either Deacon Mike or Acolyte Nick with us.

5. Bishop is discouraging the **use of choirs** during this time, to reduce seating proximity and potential air-borne contaminants.
6. Remember, Bishop has indicated that those ministering in the sanctuary ought not to wear masks as they perform their duties while they are in the sanctuary (or in a procession).
7. **Ushers:** Please assist with parishioners upon arrival to show them the sanitizer, to help find seats which are socially distant as described above; continue to take up the Collection, but please immediately bring the collection into the Sacristy for safe keeping during Mass. There will be no Offertory (Gifts) Procession.
8. **Counters:** Kathy or Desiree will be in contact with you on how to go about counting the collection depending upon your comfort level and ability to attend. Please contact them for questions.

LIVESTREAM MASS SCHEDULE

We will continue to offer Livestreamed Cluster Masses even after “reopening” on May 30/31, for the benefit of those who are not ready or comfortable with coming on-site for Mass. To be fair to both parishes, we have spent this past week (thanks to Steve Johnson’s efforts) trying to set up livestreaming at Immaculate Conception which can then be “rotated” with Our Lady of Lourdes on Sunday mornings after the reopening.

The rotation for Livestreaming will begin at Immaculate Conception this weekend (**May 31**) at the ICC’s 9:00 am Mass. The rotation will then alternate between both parishes’ Sunday morning Mass, such that the weekend following (**Jun 7**) the Mass will be Livestreamed from Our Lady of Lourdes’ 11:00 Mass.

Remember: this means that the Livestream Mass time will be different each week: it will go back and forth between being at 9:00 (when it is filmed from Kenton) and 11:00 (when it is filmed from Ada). I will try to remind everyone during each week’s Updates as to which parish (and therefore which time) the Livestream will take place.

PLEASE BE PATIENT with this Sunday’s Livestream Mass from Kenton (9:00): due to the much different acoustical environment of Kenton vs. Ada, Steve had a lot of issues this past week during his testing of the system, with quite a bit of “echoing” on the computer; he thinks he has worked out the kinks, but we may have to feel our way through this the first time or two if the audio still comes through rough.

To access this weekend’s Livestream Mass, please use the usual link we have been using:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVxcsTyz-ukNpEDHVkQWKVw>

Attached to this Update is this weekend’s Livestream Mass **Worship Aid** for those viewing from home. (For those coming on-site, please DO NOT print this out and bring it with you, since we have been directed by the Diocese not to have hymnals or other papers in the pews, to reduce “surfaces” that could be contaminated.)

Also attached to this Update is this weekend’s **bulletin for Kenton**.

MISSALETTES AVAILABLE FOR HOME USE

For the benefit especially of those who will need to continue to watch Mass via Livestream, we will be making available at each parish a **supply of the Missalette and the Music Issue** (the 2 paperback resources we use). This is partly because our Worship Aids will no longer have hymns printed, since each parish will likely be using different hymns. These will be available at each church at the end of Mass times, or also during the week by calling the parish offices. If you'd like missalettes, please contact a friend you know who will be coming on-site so they can pick them up for you, or, again, just call the offices and we can make other arrangements.

ADA T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE

I am told that the Ada T-shirts are now available, and that there will be a table set up outside after Masses this weekend for pick-up for those who will be on-site. If you are not able to be here, you will be contacted later this week for other arrangements. The Kenton T-shirt project is still underway.

WEEKDAY MASSES

For **Weekday Masses**, please note that we will observe what we normally have done in the past with our "August Mass Schedule" beginning next week (Monday 1 June). Therefore, we will offer DAILY MASSES as follows, all at 9:00 am:

Ada: on Mondays and Tuesdays

Kenton: on Wednesdays and Fridays

UPDATED SOCIAL-DISTANCED CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Reminder that we are still offering the new "Social-Distanced COVID **Confessions By Appointment**" instead of the previous "Saturday" confession times. Please see the Confessions attachment on the parish websites for the particulars; appointments can be made by calling me at 419-634-2626 (leave a message if needed). The following is continuation of the "rotated" schedule of dates and places:

SUN 31 MAY 4:00-6:00 @ KENTON
WED 3 JUNE 4:00-6:00 @ ADA

SUN 7 JUNE 4:00-6:00 @ ADA
WED 10 JUNE 4:00-6:00 @ KENTON

SUN 14 JUNE 4:00-6:00 @ KENTON
WED 17 JUNE 4:00-6:00 @ ADA

SUN 21 JUNE 4:00-6:00 @ ADA
WED 24 JUNE 4:00-6:00 @ KENTON

SUN 28 JUNE 4:00-6:00 @ KENTON
WED 1 JULY 4:00-6:00 @ ADA

PRAY FOR OUR CONFIRMANDI

This coming Tuesday, 2 June 2020, we have the joy of asking the Holy Spirit to anoint 11 of our teenagers in the **Sacrament of Confirmation**. Bishop Brennan will be visiting Hardin County to do so, and the Confirmation Mass this year (on our long-standing yearly rotation schedule) will take place at Immaculate Conception. **Please pray for these 11 young disciples**, that they grow stronger in the two principal graces of this sacrament during their teen years: the grace to go deeper in personal holiness, and the grace to evangelize (share the Gospel of Jesus with others):

From Immaculate Conception: Anne Marie Minter, Anthony Hunt, Destiney Hughes, Emma Mulligan, Claire Ketcham, Patrick Stacklin, and Addison Hensel.

From Our Lady of Lourdes: Tucker Hazelton, Wyatt Ferguson, Ethan D'Souza, and Kyden Culbertson.

Please note: due to COVID restrictions, seating is limited to only the families involved (which already have had to be severely limited), and we unfortunately cannot allow the general parish population to attend. We will, however, be **livestreaming** the Confirmation Mass, which begins at 7:00 pm; use the same Youtube link as for Sunday Masses, given above.

OFFERTORY/BAA

COVID has made life difficult more all of us in a number of ways, and the same is true with keeping our parishes running. With the inability of people to come on-site, **our offertory collections** at both parishes have dropped substantially, understandably so, while our bills keep coming. Earlier in this pandemic, I suggested that we could either send in our offertory via mail, or to wait until on-site Masses return in order to submit a "lump-sum" contribution for the intervening weeks. Therefore, I want to make a gentle reminder for everyone to consider the Offertory needs of the parishes, which comprise around 90% of normal parish income. We thank those who have been mailing in offertory, and we also thank those who will soon be making their lump-sum contributions. We have also been continuing to experiment with an on-line option, which we hope to make available to both parishes before long.

A quick note on the **Bishop's Annual Appeal (BAA)**, which normally would have been "kicked-off" in early May. This, of course, is an important means by which the Diocese supports many of its charitable missions as well as the central offices which work to support the operations of local parishes like ours. This year, the Diocese has decided to postpone the BAA to sometime in July (the exact date still needs to be worked out, since the initially-proposed date by the Diocese happens to be the last weekend that I will be here as your pastor!....which would make the Appeal a bit awkward, in my estimation....) More information to come! Thanks for everyone's ongoing stewardship support of bringing Christ to the world and to our local communities!