

Special Email – June 3, 2021

Dear St. Ann Parishioners,

As you know, the diocese has issued new guidelines regarding the easing of pandemic restrictions, with the governor's latest executive orders as their foundation. We appreciate your patience in allowing Fr. Danny and the staff the time needed to work through these guidelines, so that we can make the best decisions for our parish going forward.

Unless otherwise noted, these new procedures will be in place starting this Saturday, June 5.

Masks

- If you are fully vaccinated, you no longer need to wear a mask in any setting at the parish. You do not have to supply any proof of vaccination and you will not be asked about your vaccination status.
- If you are not vaccinated and are aged 5 and up, you must wear a mask over your mouth and nose for any Mass or liturgical celebration. If you cannot wear a mask due to health considerations, please speak directly with Fr. Danny to receive an exception. Documentation of the medical need is not required.
- As a gesture of good will, we encourage all vaccinated persons who wish to wear masks to continue to do so. Many of our parishioners have young children at home or live with family members whose health status means they cannot receive the vaccine. We act in Christian charity when we sacrifice a small part of our own comfort in order to continue to protect those who are most vulnerable among us.

Social Distancing – We will no longer practice social distancing at Mass and there is no longer a capacity limit for our worship space, so the ushers will not be seating you when you arrive. If you would like to seat yourself at a distance from others, please move upholstered chairs from behind the pews and up against the wall or ask the ushers for assistance in being seated in the Commons.

Lifting the Dispensation from Attending Mass – Bishop Knestout, in concert with the bishops of Wilmington, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Arlington, and Wheeling-Charleston, is lifting the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday and Holy Day Masses beginning the weekend of June 26 and 27. All of the faithful are encouraged to return to full in-person participation in the Sunday Eucharist, the source and summit of our Catholic faith. **The obligation to attend Mass does not apply to those who are ill; those who have reason to believe that they were recently exposed to the coronavirus or another serious or contagious illness; those who are confined to their home, a hospital, or nursing facility; or those with serious underlying health conditions.** Please speak to Fr. Danny if you have questions about your own situation and the obligation to attend Mass.

What You Will See at Mass –

- Holy water fonts will be filled.
- Hymnals will be returned to the pews, and we are all encouraged to SING!
- We will continue to use the Prayer to the Holy Spirit at the end of the Prayer of the Faithful; copies will be inserted into the hymnals for your use.
- The collection will be taken up in the pews during the Preparation; baskets will no longer be placed at the baptismal font.
- We are still discouraged from holding hands or shaking hands (other than our family group) at the Our Father and Kiss of Peace.
- At Communion:
 - We will return to three Communion stations, with two Eucharistic Ministers assisting Fr. Danny; unfortunately, we are not yet able to receive the Precious Blood.
 - There will be no table between the Eucharistic Ministers and the congregation, but the Eucharistic Ministers will wear masks for the distribution of communion.
 - Ushers will still offer hand sanitizer as you move forward to receive Communion.
- The ushers will hand out the bulletins at the end of Mass and will no longer sanitize the pews.
- A reminder that, during the summer and unless otherwise noted, the 10:30 Mass on Sunday will be livestreamed on the parish Facebook page and website each week.

Daily Mass

- Starting on Tuesday, June 8, daily Mass will be in the chapel.
- Daily Masses will be livestreamed ONLY on the parish Facebook page.
- For the time being (until our new pastor has a chance to weigh in on the question), the daily Mass schedule will be:
 - Tuesdays at 6:30pm
 - Wednesdays at 9:00am
 - Thursdays at 11:00am
 - Fridays at 12:00pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation – We return to the pre-pandemic set-up for the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturdays, 3:45-4:30pm, in the confessional room at the back of the chapel. Those who are waiting to make their confession may do so in the chapel.

A Few Other Notes

- We will no longer have porters serving in the Commons during the week when the church building is open, but the building will be open Mon-Thurs, 8:30am-4:30pm and Friday, 10:00am-4:00pm. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our many parishioners who served as porters during the pandemic; without them, we would not have been able to keep our building open for prayer!
- The church office will revert to pre-pandemic hours: Mon-Thurs, 8:30am-4:30pm.
- The school building will be unlocked on an as-needed basis.

- Prayer groups and other parish ministries and activities will no longer have to submit an attendance sheet, nor will they need to sanitize surfaces after their meeting or activity.
- We are working on staffing the nursery for the 10:30 Mass on Sundays. If you are interested in helping with this ministry, please contact Linda Mingos in the church office (lmingos@stanncc.com; 804-526-2548).
- We anticipate that the altar server ministry will return in the Fall. Young people in grades 4 and up are welcome to be altar servers (adults, too!). Please watch for announcements toward the end of the summer about training dates.

And Now, a Favor to Ask

We would love to have the assistance of several people to help us return our church building to “pre-COVID” status. If you have time, please join us at the church at 3:30pm tomorrow, Friday, June 4. With many people there, we’ll get chairs back in place, set up the confessional, replace hymnals in the pew racks, etc. No need to contact the staff, please just show up!

We rejoice that the pandemic has eased enough that we can return to some semblance of normalcy, and we really look forward to seeing you at Mass! Let us celebrate with one another, as we keep in prayer all those who still suffer because of this dreadful disease. What better day to return to Mass than the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ? Corpus Christi is this weekend!