



May 16, 2020

Dear Saint Patrick Parishioners,

Peace and every good wish in our Lord Jesus Christ!

The past two months have challenged our ability to connect and maintain our Catholic identity, since it is rooted in the public celebration of the Eucharist. However, there seems to be a light at the end of this tunnel of not having had public Masses for the past 8 weeks, because our Bishop Robert E. McElroy, wants us to formulate a plan of how the celebration of public Mass would proceed at St Patrick's Church. This plan is due by the end of next week. It seems that our Bishop is advocating for us with local and state governments, but we need a plan in place so that it can be approved. Therefore, I am writing to you to communicate a preliminary draft of the plan and various options that we can consider.

Per Bishop McElroy, the dispensation from the obligation of the faithful to attend Mass will continue indefinitely, given that the elderly and anyone with certain health conditions are most at risk, and it is best for them and members of their household to stay home, and continue watching Mass on TV or social media channels, such as YouTube. We will continue to livestream or record Masses on YouTube and the link will be posted on Facebook and on our website.

The space inside of the church has been measured and it has been determined that we can allow 65 people to enter the church and be spaced for social distancing at 6 feet apart. There could be more people, since these measurements and calculations did not take into consideration households. However, on average Sundays prior to the ongoing pandemic, two of our Masses reached over 200 people in average attendance, therefore the hall and the parking lot are still being measured, in order to calculate capacity with social distancing for these spaces.

Bishop McElroy does not approve of Mass in the parking lot where people stay in their cars. We can, however, bring chairs out into the parking lot and have Mass outdoors. This would be the safest option regarding the spread of germs because the parking lot is an open space. It would

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also provide the most space for numbers of people socially distanced, since we can definitely have more people with social distance in the parking lot than in the church.

However we must consider the weather if Mass is to be outdoors, as well as the loss of parking. We should provide some type of canopy or sun shade for those sensitive to the sun. There could be a hybrid option: some parking for people who have trouble walking, yet most of the parking space would be for chairs and Mass would be celebrated outdoors, and hopefully also live streamed into the church and/or the hall. This last hybrid option seems the one that would allow the most number of people to participate, and it would allow them the options of being indoors in the church space or outdoors. We would need to upgrade our current equipment for such live streaming.

Regardless of where Mass takes place, face masks/coverings must be worn by everyone* at all times. Signs/flyers will be posted outside and inside the church/worship space. (*Face masks/coverings are not required for children under the age of two years old due to the risk of suffocation, according to an update from countynewscenter.com)

If someone develops a persistent cough at any time, they should leave on their own or may be asked to leave the space. Please know that you are permitted to use a throat lozenge and still keep the fast to receive communion because such a product is medicinal. There may be a special location for people who have conditions such as allergies or a dry throat so that their cough may not cause distress to others. We might need a parishioner physician to oversee these parishioners who are likely to be non-contagious.

The faithful will enter the church or worship space and be guided to (or find themselves) a suitable place to sit, adhering to standards of social distancing at 6 feet apart from any other person who is not a resident member of their own household. If in the church, this will mean every other pew. The holy water fonts will be empty.

Usually we sing an entrance hymn. Because infections in churches have been traced to choirs singing, there will be no singing by a choir or the congregation. We can have instrumental music, or just a single cantor. However, we are leaning toward recorded music (instrumental and in other languages), yet legal questions arise for copyrighted performances or music.

We have cancelled our subscription to the Today's Missal and Music Issue books used in the church pews due to prohibitive increasing cost and lack of properly being able to clean them after use. The copies we have will be given away for a free will donation for the personal use of parishioners. Anyone can order their own personal copy from Oregon Catholic Press (ocp.org or call 1-800-LITURGY).

The faithful must remain in their pew/place for the duration of the Mass/service/celebration. They may recite prayers and responses where appropriate to the Mass/celebration, but they must not sing, or shake hands. They must refrain from touching their faces and if they develop a

persistent cough, they must exit the property and return to their own home. Instead of shaking hands or exchanging hugs at the Sign Of Peace, the celebrant will encourage the faithful to wave or nod to each other.

Regarding the consecration of the bread and wine into the Precious Body and Blood of Christ the Priest/Celebrant will have a patten and chalice for himself. A ciborium containing hosts to be consecrated for the congregation will be prepared prior to the Mass by a person who has thoroughly washed his/her hands, and placed on a corner of the altar, away from the celebrant presider, and remain covered until distribution. There are to be no Altar Servers.

The distribution of the Eucharist will take place at the end of the Mass, to minimize the movement of people. There will be markings taped on the floor as a guide for social distance so that communion line at the end of Mass maintains six feet of separation between communicants. The Eucharist is to be received only in the hand. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Either runners must be available to bring hand sanitizer to any Eucharistic Minister who accidentally touches a person's hand, or a small table next to a Eucharistic minister with hand sanitizer available there for sanitization should this accident occur.

Any lay ministers (Greeters/Ushers, Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion and Music Ministers) should be persons in good health, and if over the age of 60 years old, they should acknowledge being at higher risk should they wish to continue serving out of their own initiative and free will.

After receiving the Eucharist, it is to be immediately consumed. Only the Body of Christ will be distributed, and not the Precious Blood. The faithful must then exit the church to return to their homes.

There should be no social gatherings before or after Mass. Whether restrooms will be opened remains to be decided based on whether we can have volunteers to sanitize them.

There will be a box for receiving the collection. The ushers who take up box to the safe, should wear disposable gloves, and wash their hands in the sacristy after depositing the collection in the safe. You are all encouraged to support us by online giving, in order to minimize the risk to ushers and counters: <https://stpatrickschurchsd.weshareonline.org/>

We should sanitize pews (or chairs if outdoors) and other surfaces people touch, such as doors and door handles after the Mass, or sometime before the next Mass begins. The Bishops says that it may be feasible to do only at the end of the last Mass of the day. Questions remain regarding what sanitizing products will be used. We are considering purchasing electrostatic sprayer(s), since it would be more efficacious in sanitizing and it would save us time. However,

they are costly. Any restricted donations toward the purchase of this equipment would be most appreciated.

We are sharing all of these preliminary plans with you so that you can help us think if we are overlooking something, so that you can also let us know your preferences in the various options, so that you can discern whether you want to volunteer sanitizing, moving chairs from the hall to the parking lot, helping us with technology challenges, etc.

Please respond to parishsecretary@stpatsd.org or to pastor@stpatsd.org by Tuesday, May 19th, so that we can incorporate possible changes by the deadline of Friday, May 22nd.

Your pastor,

Fr. Carlos Medina, OSA