5/11/20

St. Robert Bellarmine parishioners:

 First, I want to offer my best wishes and greetings to you and your family today! I have missed seeing you all at Mass every week! May 6th, the Archbishop put out a joint letter with Bishop Konderla from Tulsa broaching the subject of reopening churches and offering public Masses again. Now this doesn’t mean that everything is going back to normal immediately and how it has been in the past, but it is a great sign that things are going in the right direction.

 The past few months have been rather stressful for us all, and that letter is a sign of hope in our world today and for the future of our parishes! I wanted to write this letter to you all to let you know how we are planning to implement some of these guidelines in our parishes, specifically for those who choose to attend at this time. I wanted to highlight the fact that there is still a dispensation from the obligation to attend on Sunday. In the letter, we were cautioned about how much of the total capacity of our church (maximum 33%) may be present at any one time. The Archbishop’s letter introduced us to the term “Social Distance Number”, which is determined by how many households can be present at any one time, while maintaining the minimum of 6 feet social distance requirement between each household. There is a maximum number of people that are able to be in each church, and that number for Corpus is 120, which is 1/3 of our capacity, and for St. Robert’s is 52. Our Social Distance number at Corpus Christi is 52; In Jones it is 15.

The letter allows for Masses to begin on Monday, May 18th and we will begin our daily Masses on Monday, May 18th at Corpus Christi. Daily Masses until we are outside of our restrictions will be 12:10 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday in the Church itself at Corpus Christi Catholic Church; Wednesday will be at Saint Robert Bellarmine in Jones at 6pm.

Starting the weekend of May 23rd/24th, we will begin our new schedules. Mass on Saturday evenings will be at 5pm in Spanish at Corpus Christi. Mass will be on Sunday for the

St. Robert’s community at Corpus Christi at 9am. Mass will be on Sunday for the Corpus Christi community in English at 11am. Mass for our Burmese community will be Sunday at 1pm at Corpus Christi.

You may have noticed, that there is a short time period between Masses on Sunday, so cleaning will be done quickly, and efficiently between the liturgies to ensure that the next Mass may begin on time, and be properly sanitized. I have met with the Ushers from both parishes, and this will be their responsibility (with the help of the priest not celebrating that Mass), on each Sunday. The sanitizing of your pew will be taken care of, so please do not use your own sanitizing wipes as many have bleach and alcohol that may strip the wood of the pews, thus causing unnecessary damage.

Mass will begin right at the time it is scheduled. One of the blessings we have had during this time of quarantine is that our bells are functional and go off on the hour and half hour. If you plan to attend, you must arrive on time! As we will need to limit the number of people attending, we will have an usher at the door making an active count of people in the church. Once the Mass begins, or our social distance number is reached, we will not be able to permit additional people into the church due to the social distancing mandates and diocesan policies that have come out. What this means practically, is that if you arrive for Mass, and find that the door to the church by the handicap ramp is closed, you may not enter the church. We will have an usher posted at the door prior to Mass and at the end of Mass to open the door. If, however, the door is closed, you may not attend that scheduled Mass in person. So, please show up early if you intend to participate in Mass!

Once you arrive for Mass, please make your way to the entrance on the north side of the church, where you will be greeted by the head usher for that Mass. At that time, you will inform the usher how many are in your party and you will be led to your seat for Mass. As each household size is different, we are setting aside parts of the church for families, couples, and individuals so as to maximize the number of people that can attend each liturgy. We will have hand sanitizer at the entrance which we encourage all to use. We also highly recommend, all parishioners to wear a mask to Mass if possible, and to bring your own hand sanitizer to use during Mass. To help facilitate social distancing, every other pew will be marked off as “reserved” to help us keep that physical distance from one another. We need to limit one family per pew, unless we are able to have 6 feet between families in any one pew. To add to the number of people we can have due to capacity, we will allow four families to be in the choir loft as overflow if needed.

We will continue to bypass the “Sign of Peace” as we don’t want to be tempted to fall back into old habits by accident and potentially break social distancing guidelines, additionally, holding of hands during the Our Father will not be permitted as mandated by the Guidelines given by the Archbishop. Distribution of the Eucharist will take place after the final blessing. The Presider, and Deacon, or Eucharistic Minister will sanitize their hands, and head to their stations for the distribution of the Eucharist. We will have one station at the front of the church as normal, and one in the breezeway at the back of the church as well. We will only be distributing the Host, and not the Precious Blood during this time. The ushers will dismiss each household to receive communion once each Minister is in place. When you are told by the usher to come forward for communion, we ask that you maintain the proper distance between you and any other household. This will also be how we plan to dismiss from Mass, so when you come for communion, please bring your belongings with you as you will not be permitted to return to your pew.

We will continue to live stream Mass during this time on our parish’s Facebook page as well as at Corpuschristichurchok.org for our daily and weekend liturgies. I understand that there are a lot of things in this letter that seem to be inconvenient, but we are doing the best that we can for the common good of all! Know that this too shall pass, and that we are doing the best that we can with the situation that we face. We love you and can’t wait to see your shining, welcoming, and loving faces again! If you need anything at all, please don’t hesitate to contact the parish or contact me at dgrover2010@gmail.com! I highly recommend that you read the guidelines for resumption of Mass for more details from the Archdiocese by going to archokc.org/mass.

In Christ,

Fr. Danny Grover