



St. Agnes + Our Lady of Fatima Parish

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20 May 2020

Dear St. Agnes+Our Lady of Fatima Church Family,

We have all been waiting for the day when we might gather again for Sunday Eucharist as a faith community at St. Agnes+Our Lady of Fatima. The Diocese of Cleveland has indicated that we may gather for worship on Sunday, May 31, while observing requirements for social distancing, sanitizing and disinfecting surfaces, and observing all we can to slow the spread of Covid19.

While we are able to gather on that day and the night before, we need to do so to do so safely and well. Many of our regular members are in the high risk category of those who may contract Covid19. Families with children also have the challenge of related illnesses that have arisen from Covid19. As there is no obligation to attend Sunday Mass for the foreseeable future, this demographic of our community is urged to continue to stay at home and pray via streaming or other opportunities to join in spiritual communion with the People of God. I want to support that decision for those who choose not to return to public worship at this time.

As our community comes to church, social distancing will be our biggest issue. The capacity for each Mass in our church will be 75 people spaced throughout the sanctuary. When that number is achieved, the church will be closed to additional participants for that service. Entrance will be through the front doors of the church only, not the office entrance, and exit will be through the Gallery entrance and through the ramp way. Holy Communion will be given only under the form of bread, and Eucharistic ministers will need to wear gloves and masks. Communion will be given in the hand only until further notice.

Sanitizer will be available at the church entrances, but all are also encouraged to bring their own personal size sanitizer as well. Since many who have Covid19 are asymptomatic and can unknowingly expose others, all will be asked to wear masks at Mass, avoid physical contact, and refrain from fellowship, refreshments, and gathering before and after Mass. The seats and all surfaces will require disinfecting, including door handles, restrooms, and railings. Assistance will be needed to tend to this in order to have three masses available for the weekend. Gloves will be provided for those who can help with this task.

Such requirements do not prohibit gathering for Mass, but will require time and commitment of members to arrange space, clean before and after Mass, and to be

attentive to the norms set in place. Attendance must be of a sufficient number to support the effort to celebrate three masses each Sunday.

To this end, I am asking that you consider attending the Saturday evening Mass at 5pm or the 8:30am Mass. There is no way possible to accommodate all of those who regularly attend 10:30 Mass at that time. There is no judgment being made about those who choose not to return at this time, but please make the best decisions for one's personal health and safety and that of all our families.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we seek to move forward. There are many other issues that Covid19 has magnified for us and will require our attention over the next several months. Staffing and personnel changes, requirements, and financial stability regarding weekly operations will all need to be reviewed and planned for as we look to the future and what "new normal" will be for us.

Until we see each other again, let us hold each other in thought and prayer. With every best wish, I remain

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rev. Robert Marva". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Robert Marva, OFM Cap.
Pastor