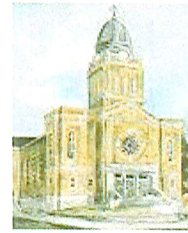


Divine Mercy & St. Bernard

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Dear Parishioners,

May 20, 2020

For the last two months that we have not had public Mass, I have missed you! I am happy to announce however, that on May 20 we resume the public celebration of Mass in the Diocese of Covington. We are returning to our previous Mass Schedule, posted in our bulletin and on our website.

You can watch our bishop's video welcoming us back on our website: dmsbcatholic.com.

Know that the Lord is close to you, even as you struggle with powerlessness, limitation and mortality. Difficulty can lead to "anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God. It can also make a person more mature, helping him discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him." (Catechism paragraph 1500-1501)

The last couple months have put everyone on edge. Some may feel strongly that we should never have stopped having Mass and others may feel just as strongly that resuming public Mass will put people's lives in danger. Hopefully we can all agree on our need to be charitable and patient with one another.

I beg you to cooperate with these efforts, which will enable us to again offer Mass for those who wish to come. While people may disagree on whether all of these steps are needed, it is what we need to do for now in order to return to Mass. If these protocols are not followed, it may jeopardize our ability to continue having Mass during this pandemic.

The dispensation from Sunday Mass is extended so no one need attend if they have concerns. Those who are sick should refrain from coming to church. Those who are "at risk" are encouraged to stay safe at home.

Our seating capacity has been reduced by two thirds to keep everyone 6 feet apart at all times (except for members of your own household). With seating being limited, we will use ushers to facilitate seating (like at a restaurant or a wedding) so that we can accommodate as many people as possible, while keeping everyone safe. At Divine Mercy, we will also be using the balcony. Because of our limited seating, please consider attending one of our less frequented Masses on the weekend (like 7:30 AM on Sunday at Divine Mercy or 4:00 PM Saturday at St. Bernard).

Please read the following protocols that have been put in place to try to keep everyone safe as we return to church:

- When you arrive at church, you will be greeted by an usher, who will help you find a place to sit.
- Hand sanitizer and bulletins are available for you as you enter.
- All are encouraged to wear a face covering at Mass, except for when they receive Holy Communion.
- For the first couple weekends we will not have any singing and Mass will be brief.
- All surfaces (pews, door handles, railings, bathrooms...) will be cleaned after every Mass. As an added precaution, we have Pledge Antibacterial cans available as you come in so you can spray a cloth to take with you to your pew to wipe anything you will be touching.
- Ushers will invite one pew at a time to come forward in single file for Holy Communion with everyone remaining 6 feet apart. Those distributing Holy Communion will wear face masks and you are encouraged to receive in the hand.
- At the end of Mass, please wait as ushers will dismiss each pew, one at a time in a controlled manner to maintain social distancing as we leave.

Remember the promise of Jesus: *"I am with you always, until the end of the world."*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Martin Pitstick, Pastor