

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

11 June 2020

First, some things you should know:

The Diocesan guidelines for the re-opening of Churches has been released and I intend to share with you some of the most important points.

Rules about social distancing (remaining six feet apart from other people) and frequent use of hand sanitizer remain in effect. Parishioners are encouraged to wear masks and gloves to Church. The Parish will not provide either of these items but will have hand sanitizer available in the dispensers at the back of the Church.

Mass will resume at Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish on Saturday, June 13 at 8:15 AM and 5:00 PM (Sunday Vigil). Masses on Sunday, June 14 will be at the usual times (8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 AM). My intention is to resume weekday Masses next week with the regular Mass times. I hope to resume Eucharistic Adoration on Monday, June 14 from after the Morning Mass until 6:00 PM. Confession will take place in the Sanctuary on Saturday afternoons from 3:00 until 4:00 PM.

Entry into Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church will only be through the door facing Queen Street (main door) and exit will only be through the door closest to the Adoration Chapel. No other doors will be open. There will be access to the Elevator on the north side of the Church for those who need it.

Parishioners will only be able to enter the Church if they have taken their temperature that morning and have no fever. They will be asked about whether they have done this by an usher at the Church door. If you have not taken your temperature that morning you will not be allowed in the Church.

Parishioners will be met at the door by an Usher and escorted to their seat. Pews will be marked as to where people can sit. You must sit at your assigned spot. Ushers will escort you up for Communion and to the exit door at the end of Mass. Seating will be done on a First Come-First Served Basis. Since the Church will only be able to hold 30 percent capacity, the maximum number of people permitted at each Mass is between 50 and 60. Family units will be allowed to sit together.

There will be no singing during Mass although instrumental music will be played.

Communion will take place in the following manner: the Usher will escort you to a position six feet (two metres) from the Priest. The Priest will say "The Body of Christ". The Communicant will say "Amen". The Communicant will then approach the Priest and receive the Host (in the hand) and then be escorted back to his/her seat. There will be no line-up for Communion.

At each Mass there will be one Reader and no Eucharistic Ministers or Altar Servers. There will be no Procession in from the back of the Church or Recession at the end of Mass.

There will be no Hymnals, *Messa Festiva* (for the Italian Mass), or Parish Prayer Books in the Church. Parishioners can bring their own *Living With Christ* Missalettes or Missals from home. There will be no Bulletins. Offertory donations may be dropped into a basket at the exit of the Church. There will be no Offertory Collection or Procession. There will be no Children's Liturgy at any Mass.

Weddings and Funerals will be permitted in Church but limited to a total of ten people. Memorial Masses for the deceased will be allowed up to 30 percent capacity of the Church (50 to 60 people). The

Pastoral Staff will be contacting all couples scheduled to get married at Holy Rosary Parish to finalize dates for their celebrations. Families who have lost a loved one during the Covid-19 pandemic will also be contacted to determine if they would like a Memorial Mass and arrange for a time and date.

Dates for resuming Baptisms, Baptismal Instructional Classes, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, Confirmation and First Communion will be set in the coming weeks. Details about the completion of the preparations for Candidates for the last two celebrations will also be available soon.

Volunteers will be needed to act as Ushers and to disinfect the Church after every Mass. Please consider assisting us in these and other tasks.

More details about these and other items will be provided to Parishioners over the coming days.

As Pastor, I realize many of these rules may seem excessive and burdensome. Yet, my top priority (and of the Bishop) is the health and safety of you my Parishioners. Many people have told me how much they miss coming to Mass and the Province of Ontario and the Bishop are allowing this to happen. It is important to understand these rules will likely be around for a while (several months). I ask for your cooperation by following them and the others which will be coming. Failure to do so will result in you be asked to leave the Church. It may also cause a spike in Covid-19 cases which may result in the closing of this Parish and the Diocese. Please do not put your health and those of others (not to mention the operations of this parish) in jeopardy. Things are not yet back to normal but they are getting closer.

Experience teaches us how you can never know what someone is really thinking. People may be nice to you believing that by doing so you will do what they want. A coach may criticize a player as a way of motivating him or her to play better. A teacher may play “devil’s advocate” in order to get a student to re-examine his or her opinion on an issue. While actions are stronger than words, it is the thinking behind the actions which is most powerful.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus teaches his disciples “if you say, ‘You fool’ You will be liable to the hell of fire”. While it is unlikely he meant these words to be taken literally, he was making an essential point about the relationship between thoughts and actions. By doing so, he would reveal how he came not to abolish but fulfill the Jewish Law. The Jewish Law made clear what a person could and could not do. The act of killing a person (without a just cause) was an offence against one of the Ten Commandments. However, before the action came the thought. A serious sin such as killing began with an idea, which grew in intensity to the point where the other individual was dehumanized. Such a person could easily be called a “fool”. This dehumanization would escalate until their death would be viewed as justified. Christ was teaching his followers were responsible not only for their actions but the thoughts which motivated them. Since thoughts existed within a person’s mind and could be hidden from others, it had become far more complicated to fulfill the Jewish Law and live a moral life. For one’s thoughts were not hidden from God or oneself.

Catholics and other people of faith are called upon to look at morality differently than the rest of society. This difference is easily observable in external actions. Believers are to be honest in their dealings with people, faithful in their relationships and respectful of the life and property of others. Yet, the hidden but more important difference is in their interior thoughts. Deceit, lust and greed can be well camouflaged but still can drive one’s ambitions, priorities and judgements. People of faith know there are only two individuals who cannot be fooled by such concealment: God and oneself. At the final judgment, they must answer not just for their actions but thoughts. This realization should prompt believers to pause and consider how they view others and what is rightfully belongs to them: their reputation, possessions

and safety. While it is impossible for one to have absolute control over one's thoughts, there is a responsibility to discard bad ones quickly.

During our present times, it is essential for Catholics and other people of faith to consider the relationship between actions and thoughts. Care for the sick should not be done out of self-interest (to prevent us from getting Covid-19) but because we see them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Fighting racism should not be done just to prevent social unrest but because we perceive every individual as made in the image and likeness of God. During times of stress, it is easy for people to become cynical and suspicious. The re-building of trust begins with the proper actions motivated by the right thoughts.

Although it is true you can never know for sure what someone else is thinking, you can take the chance that if you are honest with your thoughts, they will be honest with theirs.