

May 13, 2020 – Celebration of Our Lady of Fatima

My dear Parishioners, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Peace to your hearts, your homes and your families – SHALOM!

PERMISSION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO RE-OPEN OUR CHURCHES FOR PRIVATE PRAYER BEGINNING SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2020. OUR PARISH WILL OPEN MONDAY, MAY 18, 2020. I continue to uplift you in prayer whenever I am in our Parish Church as I pray the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office), the Divine Mercy Chaplet, celebrate daily Mass and have other moments of quiet time with our Eucharistic Lord in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament – hidden but truly present in the Tabernacle and uniquely in the tabernacle of our heart. I imagine by now we are hoping for life to return to some aspect of “normalcy”. While many of you are probably attending Mass via EWTN or Proclaim or other places that are live-streaming, the hope is that SOON our Parish Church will be open for the celebration of daily Mass and weekend Mass. Pray God that it happens sooner than later.

I continue to be astounded and so very grateful for your continued generosity each week even though the Church is closed, no public Masses and no offertory collection. But so many of you are stepping up to the plate with your offertory envelopes being delivered by USPS, some of you bringing them to the office during working hours or even at other times. Thank you, ‘Gratias agimus tibi’, Grazie, Merci Beaucoup, Dziekuje, Danke Schon, Mahalo and Dakujem.

The Diocese through Bishop Mark, Chief Shepherd of the Diocese, has offered a 4 Phase (Step) program for the re-opening of our Churches. In this letter I will speak only of the dynamics of Phase 1.

Phase 1 – The opening of Churches ONLY for Private Prayer. How will that happen for the Parish Family of St. Francis of Assisi?

- A. The Church will be open M – Th 11 am – 4 pm; Sat. 3 – 6 pm & Sun. 2 -4 pm**
- B. One may enter ONLY THROUGH THE BARRON AVENUE entrance into the Chapel Wing/Area;**
- C. Please do NOT enter the Main Church;**
- D. If you wish a candle to be lit, please take an envelope marked CANDLES and indicate where you wish your candle to be lit (St. Jude, St. Clare, Holy Family, St. Francis, St. Anthony, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, the Divine Mercy Picture, Sacred Heart, picture of Pope St. John Paul the Great or the Sanctuary Lamp) and place it in the basket on the table in the vestibule of the Barron Avenue entrance. We will light the candle where you wish it to be lit. You may light your own candle for St. Therese the Little Flower in the Chapel wing;**
- E. Please bring your own Bible, Prayer Book or Rosary or any spiritual reading book;**

F. SORRY BUT THE RESTROOMS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE DUE TO THE NEED OF DISINFECTING/SANITIZING AFTER EACH USE;

G. Please honor PHYSICAL DISTANCING. Please to your best ability be 6 feet away from another person in all directions;

H. Please wear a mask upon entering the Chapel Wing/Area and while you are physically in the Chapel Wing/Area for Private Prayer time.

I will continue to keep you updated as the Diocese enters Phase 2, Phase 3 and finally please God Phase 4 and our Church lives will return to a “new” NORMAL.

In the meantime I pray:

**May the Lord bless you and keep you;
May the Lord turn to you His Countenance
and have mercy on you;
May the Lord turn to you His Face
and grant you His Peace!
SHALOM!**

Prayerfully yours in Our Holy Father St. Francis,

**Fr. Anthony Francis, OFMConv.
Pastor**