

June 6, 2020 – 76th Anniversary of D-Day and the celebration of St. Norbert,

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

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

SHALOM!

The Lord is Risen!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

He is truly Risen!

St. Francis of Assisi Parish in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown officially re-opens (after the closure during the pandemic due to the coronavirus) on the weekend of June 13 – 14, 2020.

Thanks be to God!

However...

There are modifications/restrictions/recommendations concerning the re-opening of our Parish. There are concerns regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) since the virus is still that silent enemy around us. We need to realize that no matter how many precautions we take, there remains a risk of contracting/spreading the virus.

Here is what we need to know and be cautious about:

1. Weekend Masses are Saturday at 4 p.m. and Sunday at 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. These Masses will be celebrated in the Activity Center – the main reason is that due to SOCIAL DISTANCING, our Parish Church can accommodate only 60 people. We are able to accommodate a greater number in the Activity Center.

SINCE WE DO NOT KNOW AT THIS TIME HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE COMING TO MASS, I RATHER BE PREPARED FOR A GREATER NUMBER, SHOULD NUMBERS BE SMALLER THAN WE EXPECT WE WILL MOVE TO THE CHURCH. I am not sure about how many weekends we will be utilizing the Activity Center;

2. Weekday Masses are M, Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat. at 9 a.m. while Mass on Tuesday is at 6:30 p.m. in the Church.

Whether we are in the Activity Center or the Church, we are asked to honor the wearing of facial masks and social distancing. The Activity Center will be set-up in 3 sections of chairs;

Section 1 – single chairs

Section 2 – 2 single chairs to accommodate a couple

Section 3 – 4 – 6 chairs to accommodate family members who RESIDE IN THE SAME

HOUSEHOLD

3. As long as Weekend Masses are in the Activity Center, Confessions will be heard on Saturday at 3:15 p.m. in the Activity Center – Confessions on Tuesdays before Mass will be heard in the Church.

The Church has been arranged by blue tape closing off entry to every other pew. Again, please be aware of SOCIAL DISTANCING in the open pews.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT AT MASS?

1. Sorry but facial masks are to be worn at all times unless a person is receiving the Holy Eucharist on the tongue; (it is being highly recommended that persons receive in the hand rather than on the tongue;
2. Social distancing;
3. No physical contact at the Sign of Peace; (nod the head, wave the hand, blow a kiss);
4. Little communal singing;
5. No presentation of the bread and wine at the Offertory;
6. An usher will be holding a collection container before Mass begins and at the very end of Mass for your offertory/ there will be no collection during the Mass;

A few questions that are probably on the minds of many people are:

HOW LONG MIGHT WE BE DOING THIS?

The Bishop has not indicated how long we will have to endure these restrictions.

WHEN WILL THE OBLIGATION TO ATTEND MASS RETURN?

Good question but again there has been no directive concerning this question from the Bishop or the Pennsylvania Conference of Bishops or the USCCB. I guess we need to take 1 step at a time and 1 day at a time.

I sincerely thank you all for your understanding, cooperation and patience in regard to the above matters.

Our Parish will be blessed in the morning of Saturday, June 13 when our 1st Communicants will receive their 1st Holy Communion. We will be blessed again when our Confirmation Candidates will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on Wednesday evening, July 1, 2020. Please pray for all of them!

The Parish Council discussed the possibility of a Family Picnic at the Loran Borough on Sunday, August 2nd – more details to follow.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 539-1632.

In the meantime

May the Lord Bless you and Keep you always lovingly in the Palm of His Hand!

Prayerfully yours in Christ and His Blessed Mother,

Fr. Anthony Francis, OFMConv.
Pastor