



## Saint Andrew The Apostle Catholic Church

4050 East 38<sup>th</sup> Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46218



May 29, 2020

Brothers and Sisters,

We as a parish, as an archdiocese, as a nation, as a world, have spent the last few months coping with and adapting to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Possibly one of the most difficult of these challenges has been not being able to gather as a community to celebrate Sunday Mass. Archbishop Thompson has now called for the cautious reopening of our churches for public Masses. For St. Andrew this reopening will be Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, at our usual 10:30 time. By then, we will have waited eleven weeks for this opportunity, and I know that many of us are simply eager to get back to “normal.” But we are moving into a new “normal” which will continue to evolve and, hopefully, over time draw closer to what we had. In the meantime, we will do what we can, where we are, with what we have.

**With that in mind, I must ask that each of us exercise caution and seriously reflect on the following three things as we make our individual decisions as to when we are ready to come back to Mass:**

- **Those who are 65 and over and those with high-risk health conditions should remain at home. This is the population that is most vulnerable to the coronavirus. Of course, those who are symptomatic or have tested positive for covid-19 should not enter a church until released to do so by their health care professional.**
- **The dispensation from the obligation to participate at Mass on Sundays is extended in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and throughout the state of Indiana until August 15, 2020. No one is obligated to attend Sunday Mass at this time. It is OK for anyone, and for some it is best, to stay home.**
- **Masses will continue to be streamed online. We will still be connected as Church.**

As we begin our reopening process at St. Andrew, we will be practicing all possible precautions in order to protect everyone present as best we can, and that means some things must be different:

- All those attending Mass must wear masks. This is for your protection and the protection of those around you. (Along with complying with city directives, it is simply an act of Christian charity.)
- Please do not gather to visit in the narthex before or after Mass. Please be certain to observe social distancing as we gather, worship, and dismiss.
- Some pews have been closed off in order to allow for social distancing. Please observe the signs and blue tape. (I know that this will mean some folks will not be able to sit in their usual places, but for now it is necessary.)

- Hymnals and Mass cards have been removed from the pews. The bulletin will include a worship aid for the Mass. Bulletins will be on tables in the back of church and should be picked up as you enter. (But - no reading the bulletin during the homily!)
- The priest and the deacon will be in the sanctuary before Mass begins. There will not be an entrance procession.
- We will not have the gifts of bread and wine brought forward in procession. The large collection basket will be on the gift table by the baptismal font to gather the Sunday collection. Please place your envelope in the basket as you enter or depart church. (Envelopes may still be mailed in and the option of online giving will continue.) Thank you again for your continued support of the parish. Your generosity is wonderful.
- We will not have servers assisting at Mass. (We do value the assistance of our servers and look forward to the day when they can rejoin us, but our small sanctuary makes social distancing a challenge with just the priest and deacon.)
- We will not hold hands at the Our Father.
- We will not have the Sign of Peace.
- Holy Communion - In order to maintain all safeguards possible:
  - Only ordinary ministers of Holy Communion (deacon and/or priest) will distribute the Body of Christ.
  - We are asking everyone to please receive communion in the hand.
  - If you are not receiving communion, please do not come forward for a blessing.
  - We will not distribute the Precious Blood.
  - Our pattern for coming forward will change and will be explained at each Mass.
  - Please observe social distancing in the communion line.
- At the close of Mass, the deacon will give the dismissal, and we will sing our closing hymn. At the conclusion of the hymn please depart. The priest and deacon will remain in the sanctuary until the church has emptied out.
- At the close of Mass please practice social distancing in departing. To allow for this, all conversations should be carried on outside of the building.

Well, that seems to be a lot of changes, but let's consider what remains the same because that's what's really important:

- We are still the community of St. Andrew the Apostle, and we are still building the Kingdom in our own little corner of the world. (We are small but mighty!)
- We are still gathering to support each other as we worship. (And that support extends to all those who for whatever reason are not yet able to join us, but we pray they will be able to in days to come. Let's all be patient and do what we feel is best.)

You remain in my prayers as I ask that I might remain in yours.

Peace,

Dcn. Kerry