



ST. BERNARD CONGREGATION

June 5, 2020

Dear Saint Bernard family,

We are grateful to announce that beginning this coming weekend of June 13th/14th we will begin offering Saturday/Sunday Mass in the church which will be open to parishioners. In union with the diocesan safety plan, we are allowed 25% capacity which equals about 130 people in the church. This 130 includes the priest, musicians, lectors, etc., so you will need to sign up ahead of time for the Mass you will be attending. Please limit your attendance to one Mass per week.

The dispensation from Sunday Mass remains in effect. If you are part of a vulnerable population during the COVID-19 pandemic, you are encouraged to consider perhaps not attending at this time. I encourage you to stay faithful and unite yourself through spiritual communion during a virtual Mass whether offered online, TV, or radio. Saint Bernard will live stream our 4:00 PM Mass and then post it to our website. We will again be publishing a video to help prepare you for this experience. Below is a description of what to expect and what we need from you.

How to sign up: Due to our maximum capacity being limited to 130 people you will need to sign up in advance to attend the Saturday, Sunday or Wednesday Mass. I suggest you do this quickly. You may sign up on our website or call the main office and our staff will assist you. You cannot sign up by leaving a message. Office hours are 9AM to 3pm, Monday thru Thursday. Once you are registered your name(s) will be placed on a list for that particular Mass time. You will need to be specific as to name and number of family members attending. You will not be allowed entry into the church if you are not on the list. We ask your patience and charity. Here is the link to sign-up for Mass:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0E48ABAA2CA6F94-welcome>.

When: Saint Bernard will offer a Saturday 4:00 PM Mass along with a Sunday 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM Mass. There will be no 6:30 PM mass at this time due to the challenge of logistics. We will also offer a Wednesday 10 AM Mass. Please be flexible in attending a Mass you may not usually attend and consider joining us Wednesday for a "Sunday experience", beginning Wednesday June 17th.

What to do before you arrive: Be aware of your health and if you feel sick, be sure to stay home. Be sure to bring and wear your mask.

When you arrive: Plan to come early. Only two entrances will be open to the church. One entrance will be from the parking lot on Mary Queen Drive at the Saint Bernard statue. The second entrance will be from the parish office parking lot near the Saint Mary statue. The entrance from Saint Bernard Dr. descending the steps will be closed. You will need to wear a mask in order to enter the church. Sanitize your hands. Church doors will be propped open for ease of entry.

Before Church Entry: When you reach the church door your temperature will be taken via a non-touch thermometer. We will scan your forehead. If you have a fever, you will not be allowed to proceed. Please anticipate this and do not come if you are feeling sick.

Seating: In order to efficiently fill the church and provide safe distancing, you will be ushered to your seat. You will not have the option of choosing your seat. We ask your patience and understanding as you wait to be seated. Remember to practice social distancing in the narthex from those not of your own family. The center two sections of the church will be filled first and then the outer sections.

During Mass: You will need to wear your mask during the Mass. Children under 2 years of age do not need to wear a mask. So as to not spread contamination we will not have paper handouts with songs, missalettes or song books. There will be no choir at this time. During this time there will not be congregational singing due to the spread potential with our voices. The priests and ministers at the altar will practice social distancing and will not wear a mask at the Altar. They will wear a mask for distribution of Holy Communion.

Reception of Holy Communion: Holy Communion will first be distributed to the outside sections and then move to the two inner sections. When it is your turn, proceed forward for Holy Communion practicing social distancing from the person in front of you. When you reach the distributor, you are asked to keep your mask on along with the presider. The presider will say "*The Body of Christ*" with their mask over their mouth. You are to reply "*Amen*" with your mask over your mouth. Holy Communion will be placed in your hands and we ask that you step aside an appropriate distance and consume the Sacred Host. Low gluten hosts are available, please inform the parish in advance so we have enough.

Reception of Holy Communion on the Tongue will be by a designated distributor in the Daily Mass Chapel. For reception of Holy Communion on the tongue proceed up through the Communion line as all others. Bypass the distributor when it is your turn and go to the Daily Mass Chapel. A distributor will be there. Keep a reasonable distance for reception and after reception return to your seat.

After Mass: Though our desire to visit and celebrate will be great we ask that you keep moving and exit the church and narthex promptly. This is to respect the safety of everyone. The church will need to be sanitized after every Mass and time will be needed.

Volunteer Need: We will need assistance in sanitizing the church following each Mass. The time commitment will be about 30 minutes. We have an organized plan for eight people to quickly move through the church. Your commitment will be for one month at a time. If your family would like to assist the parish, please let the front office know and watch the parish website for a sign-up opportunity.

Returning to your car: Please practice safe distancing as you exit the church and return to your car. Be aware of traffic. Do not linger in the Parking Lot.

As we move through this second diocesan phase towards a greater re-opening we ask your patience and understanding. Many thanks for taking the time to absorb these guidelines and to prayerfully prepare! Come with a happy heart and join in prayerful solidarity with myself.

Know of my continued prayers for all our parishioners,

Fr. Mark Vander Steeg