

## Parish Update



During this time of pandemic, I have to say that I found it ironic that when I would travel to East Hanover for a burial, the gates to the cemetery were closed and access for most people was denied. Beginning in March I realized that the gates to the Gate of Heaven were locked. Last night, 5/11, we received an update from the Archdiocese of Newark. It outlined how we will begin the process of easing the restrictions that have been in place for us since the middle of March. Included here is the document entitled **"What to Expect When Public Mass Resumes."** While it is not quite as dramatic as the opening of the Gates of Heaven, it is welcome news for all of us who have suffered because our churches have been locked.

This document explains that there are 3 phases in this process. Phase 1 begins a gradual opening of our worship spaces for private prayer. Phase 2 will allow for a return to weekday Masses being made available to the public as well as funerals with the maximum number of participants being indicated at that time. Finally, in Phase 3 it will be possible for us to return to the public celebration of Sunday Masses.

Phase 1 will begin this Sunday, 5/17. Once we see how this is observed, the dates for the other 2 phases will follow. These are the 11 points for Phase 1:

1. Cardinal Tobin continues to dispense the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday as well as from "Easter duty" (the obligation to receive Holy Communion during the season of Easter).
2. Churches may be opened solely for personal prayer during limited and designated hours (see below.) Individuals and families enter the church for quiet prayer only. During opening hours, a parish staff member must be physically present in the church to ensure social distancing and sanitizing. No gatherings are permitted.
3. In accord with national, state and local health directives, those who show symptoms of COVID-19 or who have been exposed to an infected person are not permitted to enter the church for 14 days.
4. Holy water fonts must remain empty until further notice.
5. Hand sanitizer should be made available throughout the church.
6. Public celebrations of liturgies, devotions, or other group prayer are not permitted at this time.
7. Masks must be worn by all individuals while in the church.
8. Individuals and families must maintain social distancing (six feet) between each person while in the church.
9. The pastor will ensure that there is prominent notification within the church regarding the requirement of masks and social distancing.
10. Pews, door handles and knobs, restrooms and high traffic areas of the church should be wiped down and sanitized at regular intervals with the removal of trash and other items from the pews.
11. The Sacrament of Reconciliation can be offered at specified and limited times.
  - a. Confessionals are not to be used.
  - b. Social distancing must be maintained by those waiting for the sacrament and attention be given to maintaining the seal.
  - c. Masks must be worn by confessor and penitent.

Here at OLL, please note the following:

Our church will be accessible via the ramp entrance and open at the following times:

Sunday 7:00am - 1:00pm  
Monday – Friday 8:00am - 12:00pm and 6:30pm - 8:00pm  
Saturday 8:00am - 12:00pm

Priests will be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation Monday – Friday evenings from 6:30 – 8:00 and Saturday morning from 11:00 – 12:00. Confessions will be heard in the parish library which offers ample distance and a window to allow air to circulate.

All windows in the church and parish library will be left open for access to fresh air. Please note that the heat has been turned off to help keep expenses down.

The lavatories will not be accessible to help lower the risk of infection.

We have gone to great lengths to clean our worship space. We ask the assistance of everyone who enters to make sure that it is at least as clean when you leave as when you came in.

Please note that we have not yet received a definitive answer about the number of people allowed in the building at any one time. It is not yet clear from the material we have received if the state mandate of a maximum of 10 people will apply or if, due to the size of our worship space it will be based on the ability to remain a safe distance apart. We will do our best to keep you all abreast of the situation using emails, our website and social media. This includes the dates when we are able to move to subsequent phases.

Pax et bonum

Fr. Peter