



Saint Francis de Sales

614 S. Oakwood Avenue
Beckley, WV 25801

May 18, 2020

Dear Parishioner,

At last, we will begin having two Sunday Masses this weekend. **SEATING WILL BE VERY LIMITED DUE TO STATE LAW.** There is only room for two people to a pew, possibly four who live together. So, the total is at least 64 and likely a few more. The big question is how do we decide who comes, when? This first weekend — May 23 at 5pm and May 24 at 10am — seating will be first come, first served.

I don't like to be the Grinch who stole Christmas, ***my personal suspicion is this MIGHT be two weeks too soon.*** I would rather buy the New River Gorge Bridge at a special clergy discount than believe the prognosticators, pundits, politicians, and professionals (who have been wrong again and again) finally got it right this time. **THE TRUTH IS THAT I THINK NO ONE SHOULD COME UNTIL THE FIRST SUNDAY IN JUNE. BUT** as Dennis Miller used to say on SNL years ago, "That's just my opinion. I could be wrong."

Please read this entire letter (front and back) for some important information about what you can expect when you come and the conditions you **MUST** keep in mind before you do so.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU COME TO MASS

1. You will be met at the door by an usher who will insure you sanitize your hands and have a mask to be worn at all times, and only raised to receive Communion
2. Another usher will seat you. Seating will be from front to back based on arrival time. You will not be able to pick your seat and are therefore encouraged to arrive early. You will be asked to sign in with the paper provided once you are seated.
3. You will have the opportunity before you are seated to place your offering in baskets situated near the baptismal font (old side) or beneath the banner (new side).
4. You will be directed during the distribution of Communion to a single line on each side. The 6-foot social distancing standard must be observed.
5. You will be dismissed by an usher at the end of Mass. Dismissal will be from back to front to minimize unnecessary contact. If you choose to visit with other parishioners outside following Mass, please keep at least 6 feet from anyone not living with you and wear your mask.

IF YOU HAVE A COUGH, FEVER, LOSS OF SMELL OR TASTE, FEEL SICK, HAVE OTHER SYMPTOMS, OR HAVE BEEN AROUND ANYONE WITH THESE OR SIMILAR SYMPTOMS, PLEASE DO NOT COME.

IF YOU ARE 65+ YEARS OLD, HAVE ANY SERIOUS MEDICAL CONDITIONS SUCH AS DIABETES, HEART DISEASE, OR A LUNG CONDITION, PLEASE STAY HOME.

IF YOU DEVELOP A COUGH OR OTHER SYMPTOMS DURING MASS, PLEASE EXCUSE YOURSELF FROM THE CHURCH.

There are no mulligans, do-overs, second chances or restarts to a Pandemic. There is no obligation to come. You are risking your life or the lives of others, especially family. There is no effective treatment or vaccine for Covid-19. People with no symptoms have been, can be, and are spreading this disease.

You **SHOULD NOT** come to Mass, if you are 65 or older. Please don't.

You **SHOULD NOT** come, if you have any serious health problem. Please don't.

You **MUST NOT** come, if you are sick, coughing, fevered, etc.

You **MUST NOT** come, if you have been around anyone with these symptoms.

You **MUST** wear a face mask at all times except to receive Holy Communion.

You **MUST** keep proper social distance at all times of at least six feet

Do not leave your place unless you absolutely have no other choice.

Understand that you will be shown exactly where to sit.

Follow instructions from the priest, deacon, or Usher.

Pay particular attention on how to receive Holy Communion.

Be prepared to place your offering in a basket for that purpose.

Please don't plan on being able to use the bathroom. If you do, you will have to disinfect and sanitize whatever you touch.

Please be patient and prudent.

- o We will continue live-streaming Masses on weekends and weekdays.
- o You are still dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass.
- o Please pray for the dead, sick, dying, grieving, and caregivers, nurses, doctors, etc.
- o Pray for success for those working on an effective treatment, cure, and vaccine.
- o Your cooperation is both needed and necessary to begin and continue Sunday Mass

Please consider carefully these words of Saint Francis de Sales: "Nothing is so common than to find people who know what is right but who lack the courage to do it."

Fr. Paul

PLEASE READ: IF YOU ARE AGE 65+ or HAVE SERIOUS HEALTH ISSUES

It seems to me that anyone my age or older as well as those who have a breathing, heart, diabetic, or any serious health issue need to reconsider thoughts of coming to church for three or four more weeks. Coming too soon is to play a dangerous game indeed. Russian Roulette is a crazy game in which a bullet is loaded into one chamber of a six shooter. The player spins the cylinder, points the gun at his head, and then pulls the trigger. There is a one in six chance the player will die. Would any sober or sane person play this game, if he had a choice?

Please think about that. Does your life mean so little to you? Is your love for friends and family so small that coming to Mass when you don't have to is more important than the feelings of your family, if you get sick and die. You will not commit a sin if you choose wisely and stay home.