



Phone (330) 343-6976

Fax (330) 343-1406

Sacred Heart Church

139 Third Street N.E.

New Philadelphia

Ohio 44663-3900

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Greetings!

I think I have started this letter 3 times in the last couple of weeks hoping to be able to say that we are returning to normal. But the Bishops of Ohio have granted dispensation from the Sunday obligation indefinitely. With that dispensation in place it is finally time to make plans for the next months.

We need to continue social distancing, wearing of face masks (unless medically exempt) and washing/sanitizing our hands frequently. For the next months we will continue to have very little to no volunteers involved in the Liturgy. This is for a variety of reasons but for 2 particular reasons. One is that Covid continues to be spreading inside buildings where people are for extended periods of time, so we need to be cautious. The second reason is that contact with a person who has Covid requires a 14 day quarantine, so I don't want to cause parishioners or volunteers to have to do that because of activity in the Church.

Fr. Andrew, who has been serving the parishioners of Holy Trinity, has been asked by his Bishop to remain in his Diocese in Moshi, Tanzania. He is grateful for all the kindness and hospitality extended to him by the parishes. We are grateful for his assistance to us. Fr. Keck has generously given himself to us in Tuscarawas County and for his selflessness we are grateful. But Fr. Keck is at risk from Covid so we need to be protective of his health.

With all of these factors at hand, and in order that Fr. Tom and I can cover the Masses at 3 parishes, we must make changes to the weekend Mass schedule. This schedule is a temporary schedule that most likely will last for several months. Covid and seating capacity in the Church are driving how the schedule will work. Holy Trinity and Immaculate Conception do not have overflow capacity while Sacred Heart does have overflow capacity.

This will be the weekend schedule:

	Saturday	Sunday
Holy Trinity	4:30pm	11:00am
Immaculate Conception	5:00pm	8:00am & 11:00am
Sacred Heart		8:30am & 5:00pm

This will be the weekday schedule:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Holy Trinity			Penance 5:15pm-6:15pm Mass 6:30pm Adoration 7-8pm		
Immaculate Conception	Mass 8:15am	Mass 8:15am Adoration & Penance 6:30pm-7:30pm	Mass 8:15am	Mass 8:15am	
Sacred Heart		Mass 6:30am Mass 8:30am Adoration 9am -4pm	Mass 8:30am	Mass 6:30am Mass 8:30am	Mass 8:30am

This schedule will be implemented beginning Saturday, September 5, 2020. I understand that change is difficult. The good news is that Fr. Tom, Deacon Lyn, Deacon Ron and I are committed to keeping the 3 parishes busy. We are committed to keeping the Sacraments available to everyone. Once we have more flexibility with the Pandemic we will be working with everyone to develop a better answer.

There are times in this Pandemic where I have felt despair and a loss of hope. We might think if we no longer have the obligation to attend Mass then this is simply terrible. It is in those moments where I pray for Grace and for God. It is then that I am reminded of the first several chapters in the Book of Genesis. We are created in the image and likeness of God and God walked and spoke with us in the Garden of Eden, God wants to be in relationship with us. Keep Holy the Sabbath was not introduced by Moses through the 10 Commandments but by God who rested on the 7th day and was pleased with His creation. We may think that we are to be good humans but our challenge from God is to cooperate with His Grace that He gives us in abundance, so that we can be Holy as God is Holy.

I want to say "Thank you! Thank you! And thank you!" for all that you have done during this stressful time. Our hope is found in God who is actively working among us. We need to continue to be a people of hope and prayer. If you are ready to return to Church either on the weekend or weekday that is great. If you want to us to bring the Eucharist to your house Fr. Tom, Deacon Lyn, Deacon Ron and I are excited to bring you the Eucharist and talk, just call your parish's office to schedule your visit.

In Christ,

