

ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC CHURCH
310 N. MAIN STREET
PO BOX 126
HECKER, IL 62248
staug@htc.net
618/473-2217; 618/473-9141 (Fax)
June 11, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

I trust this finds you doing well...staying safe and healthy during this challenging time in our world.

It has now been almost three months since we have had Mass together in church. We truly miss gathering together for the Eucharist, receiving our Lord Jesus in Holy Communion.

We are making progress in reopening the church. The bishops of Illinois have been working with the state government to agree on the procedures that we should follow. The bishops have agreed that we should start with the Sacrament of Reconciliation and a small prayer time with ten people or less in church. If we then are confident that our greeters and ushers can seat and dismiss people, and our cleaners can disinfect pews that were used as well as the common areas of the church, we will be ready to begin having public Masses again in church.

After much planning, we at St. Augustine's are reading to move forward with the reopening of the sacramental life of our parish.

Please do not come to church if you have a fever, are feeling ill, or have been directly exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days. You are strongly encouraged to take your temperature before arriving at church. You will be asked questions about these items by a greeter when you arrive at church.

Please bring a **mask or face covering** and wear it while in church, unless you are unable to do so because of a health condition. Children under age 2 should not wear a mask or face covering.

The greeter will help you use hand sanitizer as you enter church.

Our first step will be to have **Reconciliation on Saturday, June 13th, from 1 to 3 PM.** This will be on a first come, first served basis, and there will be a Greeter to meet you at the front door of church. Only one person will be allowed in church at a time. We respectfully ask that you wear a mask this entire time, unless you are unable to do so due to a medical condition.

The area in church used for Reconciliation will be cleaned after each person leaves, before the next person in line enters.

Reconciliation prior to weekend Masses will not be held until further notice.

Provided that all goes smoothly at Reconciliation, we are planning the following:

Eucharistic Adoration: Saturday, June 20th, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Ten people will be allowed in church at a time. If there are more than ten people wanting to pray in church, we ask that people only spend 20 minutes in church, allowing others to enter. Cleaning will be done after each person or group leaves and before the next person or group enters. There will be a Greeter at the door to give you directions on where you are to sit. We respectfully ask that you wear a mask this entire time, unless you are unable to do so due to a medical condition.

Mass: Weekend Masses are scheduled for 5:00 PM on Saturday, June 27th and 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM on Sunday, June 28th, and subsequent Saturdays and Sundays at these same times.

- ❖ The church will be disinfected between Masses. There will be Greeters at the doors to direct you to the proper seating area. We respectfully ask that you wear a mask during the entire time of Mass unless you are unable to do so due to a medical condition. Those under two years of age should not wear a mask or face covering.
- ❖ Communion will be by the host, the Body of Christ. We will not share the chalice with the Precious Blood. At Communion time:
 - Ushers will move to the end of each pew and direct worshipers to the next available social distancing marker in the aisle. There will be a single-file line. The priest will be the only person distributing Communion.
 - When instructed to do so, the worshiper moves to the hand sanitizer for sanitation. All worshipers receiving the Eucharist must have their hands sanitized prior to doing so.
 - The worshiper steps forward to receive the Eucharist in his or her non-dominant hand (for example, if you are right-handed, receive the host in your left hand). Priests are only permitted to distribute the Eucharist into the hand of worshipers.
 - The worshiper moves to the left or right to the next social distancing marker.
 - Using his or her dominant hand (for example, if you are right-handed, use your right hand; the host is in your left hand), the worshiper removes one side of his or her mask or face covering.
 - The worshiper places the Eucharist in his or her mouth.
 - The worshiper replaces mask or face covering.
 - An usher directs the worshiper back to his or her original pew or seat.
 - The worshiper returns to his or her seat.
- ❖ Attendance at Mass will be first for parishioners on a reservation basis, with a maximum of 50 people allowed per Mass. There will be no Servers, no Lectors, and no Extraordinary Ministers scheduled. Communion will be single file and the Ushers will assist in the formation of the line.
- ❖ In order to make your reservation for Mass, please email the Parish Office at staug@htc.net or call the Parish Office at 473-2217 no later than 3 PM on Thursday of each week, until further notice. (With the first weekend Masses being on 27-28 June, the first Thursday with a 3:00 PM deadline for the following weekend will be Thursday, June 25th.) The reservations will be taken in time-received order.

- ❖ There will be NO Reconciliation prior to Masses until further notice. We will schedule Reconciliation as possible; or you may contact Fr. Von Deeke at 618-214-6852 to make an appointment for Reconciliation.

Please know that we, as a parish, have received guidelines and directions from the Diocese of Belleville and the Archdiocese of Chicago as to the safest ways to proceed with the reopening of our parish church. We have adjusted those guidelines and directions to meet the specific needs of our local parish and are counting on your cooperation to make this reopening successful.

While our parish staff and volunteers will attempt to take appropriate precautions consistent with the advice of public health authorities, parishioners and guests should understand that they assume the risk of contracting COVID-19 anytime they enter a public space since such precautions do not eliminate the risk of infection.

I strongly encourage those who are **over age 65 or have health conditions that make them more susceptible to COVID-19** to talk with their doctor, their adult children, or others they trust regarding their attendance at Mass.

Bishop Braxton has continued the dispensation from the requirement to attend and participate in Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. With this dispensation, it is **not** a sin to miss Mass on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation. So, please use your best judgment regarding your attendance.

Again, please email Joan Powell at staug@htc.net or call at 618-473-2217 to reserve your place at Mass on the weekend of 27-28 June.

Thank you for our employees and volunteers who have worked diligently to plan for a safe and successful celebration of the liturgy and sacraments at Saint Augustine of Canterbury Parish in Hecker!

Sincerely,

Rev. Von C. Deeke
Pastor