

Dear Parish Family of Saint Timothy,

Peace and greetings in the Lord Jesus.

Recently you may have heard in the news that beginning this week, parishes in the Archdiocese of Hartford may begin to 'reintroduce' weekday Masses as religious worship begins to reopen around the country.

Nearly 3 months ago, our lives were 'changed' almost overnight when the world was confronted by Covid-19 and life and economic realities were altered almost immediately in ways that none of us had ever experienced in our lifetimes.

The Coronavirus pandemic wreaked havoc in the lives of vulnerable peoples because of age or compromised health issues. But, as it turned out, no segment of society would be exempt from the virus which brought so much tragedy and lives lost, adversely affecting so many individuals and families

While we live in hope that we are moving in a 'positive' direction, we must also 'keep up' our guard as the pandemic continues to affect society in various ways and is ever ready to return. In the meantime, we will begin to 'move forward' in a deliberative way (with safety and health in mind) until vaccines and/or therapeutics are developed which will lead *to* a hopeful resolution to this life-threatening Covid-19 virus.

So with summer before us, Archbishop Blair has announced a 'cautious' *re-opening* of ' Public Worship' beginning this week, allowing for the 'celebration of Public Mass' under strict directives to try to ensure the health and safety of all involved.

In the last week or so, our Parish Staff and members of our parish Ministries, have begun to review the new Archdiocesan 'Guidelines' to ensure that St. Timothy's will be in 'full' compliance with health & safety directives for the 'celebration of Public Masses' in the coming months.

- a. This will be done initially through the 'celebration of some weekday Masses' and then subsequently weekend Masses at a date to be determined by the Archbishop likely later this month.
- b. Our 1st 'Weekday' Mass at St. Timothy's will be celebrated this coming **Friday, June 12th** at the usual 7:30 am time to accommodate those who may be working outside their home.
- c. Thereafter, 'Weekday' Masses at St. Timothy's will be celebrated three days a week on Monday's, Tuesday's and Fridays at 7:30 am.
- d. Given State directives issued by Gov Lamont, henceforth no more than 100 people at a time can attend an individual 'Mass' at St. Timothy's, given our Church size and need to apply required 'Social Distancing' guidelines given by the State and Church.

As regards 'Church directives', Archbishop Blair, (for the time being), will continue to *dispense* 'all Catholics (of any age)' in the Archdiocese of Hartford, from the 'Obligation to attend Sunday Masses throughout the Summer months until September 6th', Labor Day Weekend, at which time our given realities in the Archdiocese will be reassessed.

With the understanding that no more than 100 people will be able to attend a given weekday Mass until and if the State and Archdiocese makes an allowance for such moving forward, the following basic directives will be in place for the 'Public Celebration of Masses':

- a. This limited number of no more than 100 attendees (at any one Mass), will likely necessitate an eventual 'registration' beforehand (through the Rectory Office) by those who plan to 'attend' a given Mass to ensure that the permitted '100 count for Mass is maintained. This registration, especially when we begin Sunday Masses, will likely involve a 'web link' registration or call to the Rectory for those without internet access. We will keep you posted regarding potential registration in the weeks ahead. I don't believe this should be a concern for daily Mass but time will tell and decision made given our realities.
- b. Anyone attending Mass' (excluding infants and toddlers), must wear a 'MASK' throughout the Mass (except at the moment of consuming 'Communion host'), unless exempted because of a medical reason. Furthermore, Mass attendees are encouraged to bring their own 'personal' hand-sanitizers for use during Mass per directives.
- c. Each person attending Mass will be required to keep proper 'Social Distancing' while in Church, remaining 6 feet apart (at all times) from anyone 'not' a member of their own household.
- d. Archbishop Blair notes that the elderly, those with pre-existing conditions, those who are fearful or anxious, and those taking care of someone who is sick or home bound, are recommended 'not' to attend Mass during this time of pandemic. Again, all are *dispensed* from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass (when resumed), if one chooses to do so until at least Sept 6th. Individuals who will not be attending Mass during the summer months are encouraged to continue to take advantage of Masses on TV and/or streamed or taped' Masses (such as ours here St. Timothy's) while staying safe at home.

These are the basics for beginning to celebrate 'weekday' Masses, with specific guidance to be given at initial Masses celebrated in the 1st days, beginning this Friday, June 12th and Monday's, Tuesday's and Friday's thereafter, with weekend Mass resumption to be determined by the Archbishop. Each of you and your loved ones continue to be remembered in daily prayer and Mass. Let us continue to pray for our parish family here at St. Timothy's, for one another, and for all who have been (or will continue to be) adversely affected by COVID-19 throughout the world. Let us pray also for the end of tragic racial tensions at this time which have arisen yet again in our country, prodding the conscience of our nation for justice in these troubling times. Better days will come again in God's time, especially as we begin to gather together anew, albeit in a 'new normal' moving forward. Continue to stay safe & well and be assured of my daily prayers for you and our parish family of Saint Timothy's, until we meet again. God bless you all.

Your brother in Christ,
Father Alvin J. LeBlanc