

N.E.T. Catholic Faith Forward Plan

Revised June 6, 2020

New information June 6, 2020

- With state regulations updated to 25% Occupancy we will soon be able to welcome as many people as we can have in church while maintaining social distance
- For our churches this actually means about 15% occupancy, 85 people at All Saints, 75 at Holy Cross and 65 at Saint Anthony
- We begin preparation for this June 6.
- We will be ready to welcome 85, 75 and 65 people respectively beginning June 16.
- Mass attendance will remain by invitation/sign up only (call the office or sign up online)
- All other policies and procedures shared May 24 remain in place (masks, no restrooms, no crying rooms, no liturgical ministers, etc.)

Introduction

The present document will give you clear information as to how we will proceed in the coming weeks in inviting the faithful back to in person participation at Mass. Please take the time to read it carefully since all the procedures outlined here will help protect your life and the life of others and enable us to return to more fully celebrating the sacraments.

Please keep in mind that the fact that the governor communicates a modification of a given directive does not mean that this will immediately apply to our practice. We follow the instruction of our Bishop. This means that once the governor communicates something, we must wait to receive instruction from our Bishop who has been extremely diligent, supportive and helpful throughout this pandemic. We must be considerate and understand that he must carefully consider the realities of 86 parishes over 12 counties and attend to preserving the sacredness of the Sacraments before he can issue instructions in response to any new government directives and this might take a few days. We must also consider that once we receive directives from the Bishop, we too have to consider carefully how to best apply these faithfully and safely in our specific buildings and circumstances and once we make those decisions we need to set procedures in place to make this feasible which will also take time. So please be patient and do not assume anything until things are clearly and directly communicated by us regarding our specific parish. Specific procedures and timing might differ even from our neighboring parishes, so again make no assumptions and be understanding. We are all doing the best we can to continue to provide the sacraments and safeguard human life.

On May 21, authorization was given to start holding religious services with no more than 10 people in the building, and on May 23 we received directives from our Bishop as to how we

can begin to implement this. Even though this number is very limiting and we do hope that soon as the conversations of the Diocese and the state continue we might see more flexibility allowing us to congregate in larger numbers while maintaining all safety measures, we welcome this opportunity and see this as a good way to transition and to see how our procedures and safety protocols actually work in practice so that we can modify them as necessary before welcoming larger numbers of people. We all look forward to the day when it will be safe to congregate to celebrate our faith. This said, we must make sure that we take every precaution to protect the lives of all present.

As the Bishop said:

“The primary intent of all parishes is the celebration of Holy Mass with the faithful present for the administration of the Sacraments. Every other pastoral activity, while important to parish life, should remain limited and remote in order for our parishes first to be able gradually to give our people the opportunity to worship God and have greater access to the Sacraments. This must remain our primary focus: to celebrate with our people Holy Mass and the Sacraments of the Church with the reverence due to them, particularly the care of the Most Blessed Sacrament, as well as taking all reasonable precautions to preserve the safety and health of the faithful and ordained ministers. Thus, what we are able to offer our parishioners as we continue to function under restrictions, and what they should expect, will be quite different from that to which they may be accustomed. Patience and charity toward our neighbors, particularly the vulnerable, will greatly assist in a slow, but well-ordered transition back to Mass with the faithful present.

It must be noted that even with all precautions taken, there still will be a risk for anyone who attends a public gathering to contract the coronavirus. Anyone who is sick should stay home, as should anyone who fears contracting a disease by attending Mass. Parishioners who are vulnerable should remain at home in accordance with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). For this reason, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass will remain suspended for all Catholics in the Diocese of Rochester until further notice. All Catholics, if it is possible for them, should be cautious to maintain their spiritual practices, to increase their prayer and to attend Mass online as well as other devotions and opportunities to grow in their faith.”

Welcoming the faithful back to in person participation at Mass will require many changes, that will come with a sense of loss but we must remember why we are doing this, to protect life. We must also remember that most of these changes will be temporary. We should take this disruption of our liturgical routine as an opportunity to rediscover the liturgy, and maybe even to discover new aspects that will be brought to our attention by the new circumstances and practices. In all things God is working out our salvation. May God give us all flexibility, openness and patience through this next phase of this pandemic.

Procedure for the Collection

The first change you will notice is that during Mass we will no longer come around with baskets for the collection to avoid close person to person contact as well as contact with contaminated surfaces.

We encourage all that are already donating electronically to continue to do so. We encourage all who are not yet donating electronically to please consider transitioning to electronic donations. This option is safer in every way and much more efficient saving us money in

collection counting, data entry and envelopes. If you would like to transition to electronic giving but are not sure how, please call our office and we will be happy to help you set it up.

If you insist on continuing to use envelopes for your donations, we ask that you let us know by June 15 (call (607) 241-0821, or email: emmanuel.berrido@dor.org), since this is the time of year when we have to put in the order for collection envelopes for next year.

For visitors and the few that continue to use envelopes for their donations as well as for second collections, maintenance collections, candles and other donations starting May 31st, we will have one sacrificial offering station in each of our churches, where you can drop in your donations at any time. There will only be one of these stations of each of the churches.

All other donations boxes and slots will either be removed or sealed so that all donations are put into the one more secure sacrificial offering station, and also to limit contact surfaces that have to be disinfected constantly.

The Sacrificial Offering Stations will be a drop box safe and different colors of envelopes will be provided for the different types of donations such as: regular collection, donation towards deferred maintenance, second collections, candle donations, fair trade coffee donations, coffee hour donations, poor box. If you continue to receive a personalized set of envelopes, then we ask you to use your envelopes and put them directly into the drop box safe.

If you do not want to go through the inconvenience of locating the station and having to go to it each time you come to Mass even if it is not near your usual access point and also probably having to wait to put your donations in while keeping social distancing, please transition to electronic giving.

Now, with the new reality the COVID-19 has brought about we must encourage you even more strongly to transition to WeShare not only to keep money safe and parish operations efficient, as before, but also to keep you and others safe reducing contact with possibly contaminated persons and/or surfaces.

Remember that you could be sick even if you are asymptomatic and the virus can survive up to 72 hours on exterior surfaces, so through the donation you physically put into the safe in church on Saturday or Sunday you could be exposing our Admin Assistant and Collection Counters to the virus as they gather and count on Mondays.

Keep in mind that there will be no collection basket going around during Mass and if you continue to make your donations physically you will have to deposit them into the one Sacrificial Offering Station safe drop box.

Scheduling electronic donations through WeShare will also keep the church financially safe even if for some reason we cannot gather.

This pandemic has taught us many lessons about what matter most and where are trust must be placed. It has also taught us which might be the best business practices moving forward to minimize the impact on our operations of possible future crisis and to keep all of our members as safe as possible.

One of those practical lessons is that we should all have recurrent donations set up electronically through WeShare.

This way we are certain that the donations come in, they come in directly to our bank account and no one is placed at risk, not counters, not employees, not postal service, not our parishioners.

So, how can you set up electronic donations:

You can go to <http://www.netcatholic.org/donate> and you will find a link to the donation site for each parish.

Or you can go directly to the donation site for each parish:

- Holy Cross: <https://holycrossdryden.weshareonline.org/>
- Saint Anthony: <https://saintanthonygroton.weshareonline.org/>
- All Saints: <https://allsaintslansing.weshareonline.org/>

If you would like to do this but are not very good with computers, please do not worry, just give us a call (607) 241-0821, and we will set it up for you, it will not take more than a 10 minute call.

General Safety Procedures:

- Strict physical distancing must be observed at all times, defined as “avoiding close contact with those outside one’s household.”
- Disinfecting cleaning will be necessary before and after every Mass.
- Access to the church will be through the main door ONLY which will be propped open before Mass so that people do not need to touch doors as they enter.
- Cry rooms and nurseries will be closed.
- All unnecessary chairs, tables, furniture will be removed to limit cleaning.
- All missalettes, hymnals, prayer cards, and other paper resources will be removed from pews.
- Not all pews will be used, intervening pews will be cordoned off to assure six feet in all directions between household groups or individuals.
- Holy Water fonts and Baptismal fonts will remain empty.
- Single-use, for that Mass only, worship aids will be distributed in print form and disposed of in receptacles after Mass. (There will be no hymnals).
- *The Book of Intercessions* will be removed until further notice. As always you can submit your prayer intentions for the bulletin via phone or online. These must be for yourself or someone under your direct care. Intentions for third parties will not be published to preserve people’s privacy.
- Liturgical ministries initially will be considerably limited: The priest, one (1) musician and one (1) cantor. Due to the research that shows singing expels significantly more aerosolized particles of virus than speaking, choirs and congregational singing will not be possible during this transitory period.
- There will be no Ushers nor greeters.
- There are to be no altar servers or sacristans until further notice.

- There will be no coffee hours or congregations of the faithful of any kind before or after Mass on the parish campus until further notice.
- There will be no Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion other than the Pastoral Associate.
- Bulletins will be made available only after Mass, on a table for the parishioners to pick up on their way out of church. It is preferable that people read the bulletin online. We will continue to email the bulletin weekly and to mail the bulletin to parishioners who do not have email.
- The obligation to attend Sunday Mass is suspended until further notice.
- Those who are at a higher risk for COVID-19 and those who are concerned for their health are urged *not* to come to church for Mass. Those who cannot attend Mass may be encouraged to spend time daily reading the Scriptures, praying with their families, joining livestreamed Mass, and making an *Act of Spiritual Communion*.
- Those who feel in any way sick should not enter the church under any circumstance, not for Mass and not for individual private prayer.
- In accord with current policy of the State of New York, the faithful (over two [2] years old) must wear cloth face coverings when in public, including when they come to church. Masks must be put on **before** you leave your car and **be kept on until you are back in your car**. Masks must be worn every time you are on church campus even for individual private prayer and worn the entire time. **People found on church campus at any time and for any reason without a mask will be asked to leave.**
- Attendees should sanitize their hands at the entrance of the church via sanitizer stations.
- All present at Mass should sit 6 feet or more away from others. Families of the same household may sit together.
- We ask that you plan accordingly. At this time, given the difficulty on maintaining social distance and rigorous and frequent cleaning **our restrooms will not be open** before, during or after Mass. Only the main church will be accessible, and only through the front door which will be propped open. All other doors and spaces including the parish hall will be locked.
- The holding of hands during the Lord's Prayer, not part of the *Roman Rite*, is strictly forbidden.
- At the end of Mass we ask that you remain still in your pews until a minister indicates that you can leave. As you leave please be aware of maintaining social distance from others and go directly to your car.

The Distribution of Holy Communion

- “As always, Catholics in the state of grace are welcome to receive the Sacrament although no one is obliged to receive Holy Communion. Those not receiving Holy Communion sacramentally are urged to make *Act of Spiritual Communion*, inviting the Lord into their hearts. When approaching for Communion, form a single line in the middle of the center aisle and remain six feet apart from others, observing the markings on the floor. After the priest or minister says, ‘The Body of Christ’ and you say, ‘Amen,’ approach the priest, stopping an arm’s length from him.

- Reception of Holy Communion on the tongue remains permissible, as required by the liturgical law of the Church, with the admonition that the faithful should be strongly encouraged to receive Communion in the hand for the duration of the pandemic.
- “If you wish to receive Holy Communion in the hand, lower your mask, extend your arms and open your hand up fully, receive Holy Communion, step away from the priest, and then consume the Sacred Host. If you wish to receive Holy Communion on the tongue, please come up last. Then, lower your mask, extend your tongue fully and then move to the side to replace your mask. Then return to your pew by the side aisle.”
- There will be only one station for distributing Holy Communion in the Sacred Host. The Precious Blood will not be offered.
- Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if a member of the faithful is wearing gloves
- When receiving Holy Communion, communicants should minimize the time when their mask is lowered.

Timeline, Modified Mass Schedule and Schedule in which our churches are open for private prayer

All this considered, Holy Cross Parish Dryden/Freeville, Saint Anthony Parish Groton and All Saints Parish Lansing **will be ready to invite the faithful to join us physically for the Celebration of Holy Mass on June 2, 2020.**

Since, as of May 21, the directive is that the number of people in church cannot exceed 10, this means that we will have the priest, a musician and a cantor (Dawn Burdick) and 7 members of the faithful present. **Attendance at Mass at this time, will be by invitation/sign up only.** Those that show up at the door and are not on the list of those scheduled to attend on a given day will not be admitted into church. Please understand that having to turn people away will be extremely painful, so if you are not scheduled for a given day, please stay home and join us online.

Initially we will be calling and inviting those that we know are not able to attend Mass online because they do not have a computer or do not have internet service. If and when spots are available, we will send out a sign up via email so that others can sign up to attend. We ask that you exercise Christian charity and while numbers are so limited do not sign up more than once a month so that we all have an opportunity to receive the Most Holy Eucharist at least once a month.

If and when the restriction in the number of people is modified, then we will be able to provide weekly Sunday Mass for all of our people to attend, but attendance will still be by sign up/invitation to make sure we do not exceed the number of people that we can safely have inside each building (this is, so that families or individuals can keep 6 feet distance from others in all directions). In this manner Holy Cross fits 75 people, Saint Anthony 65, and All Saints 85, in addition to the 3 ministers: priest, musician and cantor.

Beginning June 1, and until further notice our **Mass schedule** will be modified as follows:

Monday, no Mass.

Tuesday, 10:30 am Mass at Saint Anthony (attendance by invitation limited according to state policy).

Wednesday, 10:30 am Mass at Holy Cross (attendance by invitation limited according to state policy). ***This Mass will be livestreamed.***

Thursday, 10:30 am Mass at All Saints (attendance by invitation limited according to state policy).

Friday, no Mass.

Saturday, 2:30 pm Sunday Vigil Mass at All Saints (attendance by invitation limited according to state policy).

Saturday, 4:30 pm Sunday Vigil Mass at Saint Anthony (attendance by invitation limited according to state policy).

Sunday, 8:30 am Mass at Holy Cross (attendance by invitation limited according to state policy). ***This Mass will be livestreamed.***

Sunday, 10:30 am Mass at All Saints (attendance by invitation limited according to state policy).

Sunday, 2:00 pm Mass at Saint Anthony (attendance by invitation limited according to state policy).

Sunday, 4:30 pm Mass at Holy Cross (attendance by invitation limited according to state policy). ***This Mass will be livestreamed.***

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, we will continue to offer our additional six opportunities for prayer. ***Please note that there will be no in person attendance of the faithful for any of these devotions*** (Angelus, Sacred Heart and Adoration and Benediction). All these will be livestreamed and we invite you to join us online. For Adoration and Benediction during Ordinary Time on Tuesdays we will be reciting the Rosary, on Wednesdays we will be meditating on the Holy Spirit and on Thursdays we will be meditating on the Most Holy Eucharist.

The schedule in which our **churches are open for private individual prayer** will also be modified starting June 1 and until further notice as follows:

Monday and Friday **all churches** will be open from 8 am until 8 pm.

In addition:

All Saints will be open 8 am-8 pm Tuesday and Wednesday and closed Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

Saint Anthony will be open 8 am-8 pm Wednesday and Thursday and closed Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday.

Holy Cross will be open Saturday 8 am-8 pm and closed Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday.

Please note that our parish offices will continue to be closed. You can always request Mass intentions or obtain any information from the office by calling (607) 241-0821, Monday-Friday 8am-8pm or by emailing emmanuel.berrido@dor.org.

The offices will open when we get directives both from the state and the Diocese allowing it, and no sooner than June 23, 2020, since we have to make modifications to allow for social distance. More about this will be communicated in the coming weeks.

May the Lord give us all patience, flexibility and hope as we slowly and carefully resume our attendance at Mass.

A.M.D.G., Father Daniel