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*Proclaim Christ and make disciples through the sacramental life of the Church.*

May 14, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Despite this challenging time, Christ King and Saint Bernard Parishes look forward with resilience and hope. The country is dealing with unemployment and an uncertain financial picture. Each of us has our own unique struggles, whether it's dealing with job or income loss, mental or physical health, or stress from absorbing all that is happening. With Jesus, nothing is impossible. When we grow our friendship with Jesus Christ, we become the best versions of ourselves, and even better versions of ourselves as we handle suffering.

**Firstly**, I want you to know of the parish's prayers and presence to you. We have used technology to be present in a semi-personal way through videos, social media interactions, and video conferencing. This has been very well received.

At the same time, I am sensitive that many of you do not have internet access and are not able to experience these interactions. I, Fr. Will, and our entire staff has been regularly praying for you and reaching out in other ways when we are made aware of needs.

For those without online access, here is what we have been up to. The staff of both parishes has been very busy, meeting and praying regularly by video conference as a whole and in small groups. We've been celebrating funerals in small gatherings, celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and celebrating Anointing of the Sick to those approaching the end of life. We've been handling the deferment of weddings, baptisms, and celebrations such as Confirmation, First Communion and graduations. We continue to meet with many people electronically or in person for pastoral needs. Our schools have continued the complex task of forming our children in methods other than in-person instruction. Our formation staff has been producing materials and working on ways to reach children and adults. Pastoral and Finance Councils continue to meet electronically to help me discern the challenges we will face as parishes, especially financially. Planning is taking place for parish and school operations in the short and long-term future. Our churches have remained open for private prayer. Our staff has been actively attentive to community needs, many of which are unclear or different due to restrictions on services. And Fr. Will and I celebrate Mass every day, without a congregation, fulfilling Mass intentions and praying for all of you.

The priests and staff take seriously our commitment to the mission of discipleship through the Church. This work, because it is being done differently, has been challenging but meaningful as we keep our commitments to God, and to you.

**Secondly**, with carefully formulated plans, we will gradually start public Sunday Masses May 30 and 31. These are not intended as full gatherings but a gradual and experimental start. Please note the details unique to our two parishes. They may change, even week to week.

- The obligation for Catholics to attend Sunday Mass is waived in Milwaukee until at least July 5. I encourage those more susceptible to infectious diseases to refrain from immediately returning to Sunday Mass. You are encouraged by the Church to hold off.
- **Mass times are changed** to accommodate cleaning and logistical considerations:
  - Christ King: **4:00** Saturday, 8:00 and 10:30 Sunday
  - Saint Bernard: 4:00 Saturday, 8:00 and **10:30** Sunday
- Entrance to Saint Bernard is restricted to the main vestibule doors. Entrance to Christ King is restricted to Swan Boulevard. At Christ King, those who have physical mobility concerns will be admitted through the Parish Center entrance. This guideline must be adhered to as we must count every person in the building.
- Capacity is limited to 140 at Saint Bernard and 270 at Christ King. When capacity is reached, the doors must be locked. Take this with a spirit of sacrifice and knowledge that you are still united spiritually with others that weekend, including those new to Mass. Because not everyone can attend, and because the entrances must be closely monitored, once you have entered, I sincerely request that we do not leave early.
- Bring your own hand sanitizer if you wish to use it.
- While pews available will be limited, you are responsible for spacing within the pews.
- The liturgy will not be what we are familiar with. Communion must be distributed by the priest alone, which will take some time, for example. Other changes will occur, and instructions given if necessary.
- Ministers will be assigned, and extremely minimal in number. Volunteers cannot spontaneously help, and the sacristies will be locked.
- At the end of Mass, all must leave the church immediately and not congregate or socialize. This will be hard, but I ask you to please exercise this. I pray we can remain after Mass in the future, but this is not the time.
- Finally, I ask your cooperation with a positive and generous spirit and flexibility with new limitations and our imperfect execution. If guidelines are not followed, we may not be able to continue public Sunday Mass for some time.

Rather than a long list of restrictions, I have developed plans based on highly controlled and minimal minister participation, strategic use of our two spaces, and trust in your prudent choices as adults.

**Thirdly**, I wish to thank you for your perseverance, your amazing witness of faithfulness, and your many words and gestures of kindness during this time. Your calls, letters, emails, videos, pictures, and gifts have been so helpful to us as priests and staff who have struggled without gatherings in person.

Whether in the next few weeks or at some point in the future, I want you to know I can't wait to see you, perhaps with a few extra pounds, and your true hair colors finally revealed.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Phillip Bogacki*

Very Reverend Phillip Bogacki  
Pastor, Christ King and Saint Bernard Parishes