

May 10, 2020

Dear Saint Michael parishioners,

I hope you continue to do well. The following is the latest from Saint Michael parish.

We are beginning publically-attended Masses tomorrow, Monday, May 11.

1. **Publicly-attended Masses.** Following state, city of Lincoln, and Lancaster County health directives, Saint Michael parish will resume daily Masses May 11 at 7:00 A.M. and 5:30 P.M. and weekend Masses Saturday at 5:00 P.M. and Sunday at 8:00 A.M. and 11:10 A.M. All Masses will be in the gym. For the next several weeks, we will also continue to live-stream the 8:15 A.M. daily Mass and 9:30 A.M. Sunday Mass. I ask that there be no one in attendance for the live-streamed Masses so we can control the setting.
2. We will observe all safety measures and guidelines to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. That is, chairs are set six feet apart, and if you have a mask, I ask that you wear it at least during Mass. We will have masks available for those who do not have one. Chairs will be sanitized after each Mass. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the gym and building. More details and directions will be provided at Mass.
3. In addition, Archbishop George Lucas, the apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Lincoln, is continuing to suspend the obligation for Catholics to attend Mass in the short term. What that means for all Catholics is that the obligation to attend Mass continues to be suspended until further notice; however, Saint Michael parish, beginning May 11, will revert to its regular Mass schedule for those who wish to attend. Confessions will be heard one half hour before each weekend Mass in the bell tower.

### **Guidelines and Safety Measures for Parishioners During Reopening**

Please use your judgment and the following guidelines in determining your attendance at Mass.

As of May 11, 2020, Saint Michael parish is permitted to gather for the celebration of Mass while practicing appropriate behaviors for containing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. These guidelines **are subject to change in the event of new instructions from local or state health officials and the Office of the Bishop.** If anything changes, I will let you know as soon as possible.

In order to accommodate as many people who want to attend Mass, we have set up the gym for daily and weekend Masses. We will do everything that we can to make sure that all surfaces, chairs, door handles, hand railings, etc. are cleaned and sanitized regularly. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the building.

#### **General Guidelines:**

- The dispensation from the Sunday and Holy Day obligation remains in place.
- Gatherings are limited to the Sacred Liturgy—Mass and other sacraments, so all forms of public liturgies in churches are permitted.

- **All other parish and school activities remain restricted**, including after-Mass gatherings such as coffee and rolls, funeral luncheons, wedding receptions, etc. The Archbishop has restricted outdoor Masses.

**Those Who are Encouraged to Stay Home:**

- The sick
- The elderly
- People with underlying medical conditions
- Family members who live with elderly people or those who are at risk
- People who have access to those at risk in nursing institutions
- People who have upper respiratory or flu like symptoms
- People who live with someone with upper respiratory or flu like symptoms
- People with COVID-19 or live with someone with COVID-19
- People who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19

**Requested “Containment Practices” for those Attending Mass:**

- Family members may sit together.
- Rows have been spaced six-feet apart.
- Cough in your sleeve.
- Place your contribution envelope in the basket provided as you enter or exit the church. The ushers will not “take up the collection” during Mass.
- No hand holding during the “Our Father.”
- Sign of Peace is omitted.
- Form a single file line with six-foot intervals when processing forward to receive Holy Communion.
- Follow the instructions of the ushers.
- Avoid gathering in the vestibule or near the doors of the church following Mass.

4. **First Communion and Confirmation.** As you know, both of these sacraments have been postponed. We will consult and determine what the best day(s) and time(s) would be to schedule each of these sacraments and communicate that.
5. **Livestreamed Mass, Devotions, and Commentary.**  
For the next several weeks, we will continue to live-stream Mass for those who choose not to attend Mass. Father Schwenka, Deacon Sasse, Christian Schwenka, and Joe Allen continue to do a very, very fine job of capturing and conveying daily and Sunday Masses and *Coffee-N-Clerics*. The broadcasts just keep getting better and better. Seminarians Joe Allen and Christian Schwenka will live with us until the end of the summer.
1. **Formed.** Just a reminder and an invitation utilize to use Formed.org, a media platform on the Catholic faith sponsored by the Augustine Institute in Denver, Colorado. Get thousands of movies, programs, audio, and books on demand instantly. We have a parish subscription that allows anyone to take part. Contact the parish office with questions.
2. **Charity and Stewardship Appeal.** I am very grateful that so many of you have supported St. Michael parish these past few weeks. All of your support and stewardship has allowed us to meet this unique challenge and get through it. Forgive me for having to make another plug for the annual Bishop’s Charity and Stewardship Appeal. The appeal supports works of mercy,

evangelization, youth and adult education, our overriding mission of Making Missionary Disciples, and meeting our financial obligations. Recently, I sent each parish family a letter along with a pledge card asking for a pledge to the appeal. To date, we have received 228 pledges, totally \$164,670. Last year, St. Michael parish had a total of \$188,903 pledged. If you have not yet done so, I humbly ask that you consider helping me by making a pledge to the annual appeal. You may do so by mailing your pledge card directly to the Diocese or parish office, donate on-line at <https://www.lincolndiocese.org/diocese/charity-and-stewardship-appeal>, or you can text 531-233-1022 to give.

3. If any of our young people want to write me letters or draw pictures or write poems or stories about their experiences during this time, please encourage them to send them to me, and I will write them back: Fr. Kenneth Borowiak, St. Michael Parish, 9101 South 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68516

Please know too about our sincere appreciation for all of your expressions of support, prayers, offers of help, and food that many of you have provided. We are very grateful. Be assured of our prayers for you. If there is anything that we can do for you, please let us know at your convenience: [frborowiak@cdolinc.net](mailto:frborowiak@cdolinc.net) or 402-525-2566.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Kenneth Borowiak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.