



St. Joseph Catholic Church

228 East Hendricks Street, Shelbyville, IN 46176
Phone (317) 398-8227

+JMJ

17 March 2020
Feast of St. Patrick

Dear Parish Families,

As you know, we have entered into an extraordinary time, one that will create for a time a “new normal.” We pray this will not last long. Based on the recommendations from health officials concerning the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgency to stem social spread, the five Catholic bishops of Indiana have suspended all public Sunday and weekday Masses throughout the state of Indiana and have closed all perpetual adoration chapels and other ministries. Parish offices are now closed to the public. It appears that Good Friday—with its empty churches, bare altars, lack of sacraments, etc.—will last longer than a day this year.

Since the parish’s social and sacramental life has been displaced for this time, we will need to look to other ways to fulfill our mission statement. Our mission statement reads: *The mission of St. Joseph Parish is to be the living body of Christ in Shelby County through worship, service, formation and community.* I would like to share some ways that our mission can continue—albeit differently:

Worship

- The following worship opportunities will be sent out via Flocknote and Facebook:
 - Video Masses (*English: 7am, Spanish: Noon*)
 - Stations of the Cross (*Sent out Friday @ 6pm*)
 - Holy Rosary (*Sent out Saturdays at 4pm*)
 - Holy Hour w/ Divine Mercy Chaplet (*Sent out Wednesday at 3pm*)
 - Tips for Mass & Devotions: As you watch Mass and other devotions on your screens, please kneel and stand (as able) at the appropriate times. It is good practice to continue to dress nicely for Mass in your home, continue to fast prior to Mass, place a candle on each side of your screen, and put a crucifix or holy icon nearby.
 - At Communion time, make a spiritual communion: *My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.*
- The Sacraments of Confession and Anointing of the Sick will be available. I am waiting for further guidance from the Archbishop regarding how this will take place.

Service & Community

- Parishioners are asked to remain calm, to reduce social media and news consumption, focus on prayer, gratitude and serving others
- We will encourage parishioners to reach out via phone, skype, zoom or other means to remain in contact with our sick and shut-in parishioners and other neighbors. Please call any elderly parishioners who sit near you at Mass or who you know in any other way!
- We will maintain meatless Fridays as a way to unite ourselves to the poor and to pray for those who are struggling.
- For those who are able, we suggest supporting local family-owned businesses/restaurants by purchasing gift certificates to be used after this crisis has passed. In the case of restaurants, please consider purchasing carry out.
- We will continue to offer support through our St. Vincent de Paul Society to those who are struggling and in need of the basic necessities. The help line is (317) 395-7027.
- We will continue to promote online giving. Donate here: <https://www.stjoeshelby.org/online-giving/>

Formation

- We will continue with weekly Elements of Faith series and will add an additional shorter version, Elements 2.0.
- St. Joe School will continue with e-learning, except for next week (Spring Break).
- Please consider using FORMED at <http://formed.org> (Parish code: K37RPD) to watch Catholic material.
- We will email coloring pages for each upcoming Sunday Gospel and the coloring book pages for the Stations of the Cross to engage your younger children.
- Fr. Mike's E-Ligion (e-learning for his religion class) will be shared via Flocknote and Facebook for the edification of all parishioners.

If you have any needs at all, please contact one of the following:

- Fr. Mike, St. Joseph Pastor: (812) 391-0047 or frmike@sjsshelbyville.org
- Sr. Joan, St. Vincent PLC: (812) 455-9348 or joanm1213@gmail.com
- Dcn. Tom, Deacon: (812) 343-1749 or thill@sjsshelbyville.org
- Gaye McKenney, St. Joe Parish Council President: (317) 364-7859 or gayemck@comcast.net

Please share the above information with those who may not be on Flocknote or Facebook. I am attaching the letter from the Archdiocese and will keep you updated as this unfolds. Please stay home for your safety and that of others! Let us continue to PRAY HARD for and fast and complete end to this pandemic, through the intercession of St. Patrick, St. Joseph, and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Let us pray for our leaders, that they may wisely guide us all back to health peacefully and quickly. Let us pray for those affected by this pandemic in any way, especially those who have died and those whose burdens are heavy.

In Christ,



Fr. Mike Keucher, VF

Pastor

Statement of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis on the Suspension of Public Celebration of Mass and the Temporary Closure of the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center and Agencies (03/17/20):

As the health and safety conditions in our archdiocesan community have shifted, the spread of the COVID-19 virus is a moment for Catholics and all people of goodwill to offer special prayers of intercession for the healing of those infected, for the protection of the elderly and infirm who are at greatest risk, for the prevention of the disease's spread, and for the courage and strength of care providers who minister to the sick, their families and those most in need. With deep trust in the Lord and with a close attentiveness to the guidance given by experts in the fields of health and safety, the following decisions have been made about our operations and the liturgical life of those within the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Based on the recommendations from health officials concerning the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgency to stem the spread of the virus, the five Catholic bishops of Indiana have suspended effective March 18 and until further notice all public Sunday and weekday Masses throughout the Province of Indianapolis, which is comprised of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Dioceses of Gary, Evansville, Fort Wayne-South Bend, and Lafayette.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, the Archbishop of Indianapolis, has also suspended all other liturgical services and gatherings of the faithful effective Wednesday, March 18 and until further notice. Of course, the archbishop's dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass from March 13 continues until further notice.

- We encourage all priests to celebrate Mass privately for the good of the People of God, the Church and the intentions of the day. The archbishop has given permission (GIRM, 374) for the Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions as well as Votive Masses on Lenten weekdays during this time.
- Televised and online Masses provide opportunities for the faithful to remain connected in some way to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass during this difficult time. Parishes with the potential to broadcast their own Masses should do so. All permission requirements for the online use of the prayers and readings of the Mass in both English and Spanish have been granted.
- The archbishop and some of the priests on his staff will be making online Masses available soon. Please visit the homepage of the archdiocese, www.archindy.org, for more information.
 - During a time of prayer on Sunday or while viewing the Mass on T.V. or online, the faithful are encouraged to make an act of Spiritual Communion. This beautiful devotional practice in the Church is a real source of grace in communion with our Lord. Below is an example of a prayer for spiritual communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.
- The faithful are also encouraged to prayerfully read the readings of Sacred Scripture for the day or to pray the rosary.
- To provide for the pastoral needs of the people, pastors and parish life coordinators are invited to utilize staff in parishes in a safe and limited way to perform the most essential functions and to attend to routine maintenance.
- Out of an abundance of caution, parishes and chapels, including perpetual adoration chapels, should remain closed until further notice.
- Decisions about the celebrations during Holy Week and beyond will be made in the coming days.
- As to the celebration of other Sacraments, whenever possible any scheduled celebrations should be postponed until further notice. This includes the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Matrimony.
- More information will be forthcoming regarding the health precautions that should be taken for the celebration of the Sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick (and other Rites in Exceptional Circumstances), which should be administered whenever possible for those in danger of death. Regularly scheduled visits to vulnerable persons and to the homebound should be suspended until further notice.
- Finally, the celebration of funerals should be postponed whenever possible. If a funeral is offered, then it should be celebrated outside of Mass and in the presence of a very small number of the faithful who

practice the prescribed precautions for hygiene and social distancing. A Mass for the intention and the repose of the soul of the deceased may be offered privately by the priest.

- Additionally, the archbishop has mandated the closing of the Catholic Center and related agency offices until further notice. Those employees who are able to work remotely from home are encouraged to do so.
- All Catholic schools in the archdiocese will continue to be closed until at least April 6.
- Information related to compensation and care for our employees and for the financial well-being of our communities is being compiled.