

Dear Parishioners,

I hope that you are all doing well and staying healthy! While the coronavirus has impacted a lot of organized activities, Mother Nature seems to be compensating us with beautifully warm summer weather! I hope that you have been able to enjoy it.

I would like to update you on a few matters this week. First, many of us are probably aware of the Duluth City Council having passed a city-wide ordinance requiring the wearing of face coverings when indoors in public places, with a few exceptions. First of all, please remember that this ordinance only has effect within the boundaries of the city of Duluth. To my knowledge, neither Two Harbors nor Silver Bay have passed any similar ordinances. However, while we are not required by law to wear face-masks at church at this time, I would like to remind all of us that the Bishops of our state, including our own Diocesan Administrator, Fr. James Bissonette, wish for us to remember that the wearing of masks at Mass is *highly* encouraged. It's for this reason that our parishes are doing our best to make sure that a small supply of masks is always available at the entrance to the churches for those who don't have a mask, or perhaps forgot theirs at home.

Second, a note about how we are taking up collections at Mass. As I said in last Friday's email to parishioners, we have resumed the practice of ushers taking up the collection during Mass. However, I have also left the donation basket in place at each parish for those who may wish to place their donation in it at another time (during daily Mass, etc.). You are free to use either means in giving your donation. Holy Spirit parishioners: please note that the empty paint bucket that is a part of the display for the restoration project on the left side of the back of the church is solely for donations to the restoration project. I kindly ask that you please do not place your regular weekend envelopes in that paint bucket. All donations placed in the paint bucket will only be counted towards the restoration project. The basket for general donations is across the aisle, on the right side of the back of the church.

Third, please remember that in order to promote the necessary social distancing, confessions are being heard in each parish in temporary locations. At Holy Spirit, confessions are being heard during the normal times in one of the classrooms of the education center. At St. Mary's, confessions are being heard in the cry room in the back of the church. St. Mary's parishioners: please note that parents are still free to use the cry room as a cry room during Mass.

Fourth, as the numbers of those who are returning to the celebration of the Mass in person on the weekends continues to rise, please note, parishioners, that there is a definite limit to how many persons can be seated in the upstairs church during any given Mass, and once that threshold has been met, any further attendees who arrive will need to go to the social hall where the live-stream of the Mass will be broadcasted for them to participate in. I say this as a reminder that if you wish to be seated upstairs for Mass, you may wish to arrive a bit earlier to Mass than you normally would in order to secure a place for you and your family to sit.

Finally, just a note let you know that since changes in protocol and policies at church due to the coronavirus have seemed to plateau for the moment, I will be writing this email update letter to parishioners *every other Friday*, rather than every Friday. If and when new changes take place to protocols or practice, or should there be events of significance that occur, I will send a special email at that time. May God bless you and your family and keep you safe!

Fr. Steve Laflamme

Pastor