

## The Parish of St. Joseph

135 Livingston Avenue, Grimsby, Ontario L3M 5J6

June 11, 2020

Dear Parishioners of St. Joseph;

I pray that this message finds you doing very well. Today as I celebrate the 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood – it is a day of great joy for me.

I also wish to bring you good news! The Ontario Government announced on June 8, that all places of worship will be allowed to open to the public at 30% capacity. Yesterday, Bishop Bergie, sent a letter to all priest and parishioners of the Diocese of St. Catharines, allowing parishes who can safely open – to do so beginning this weekend. If parishes are to re-open, they are to abide by all health standards and at the reduced capacity.

This weekend is the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, known as *Corpus Christi*, weekend. There is no better time to safely open the church and give thanks to God for being able to receive Jesus in Holy Communion than this weekend. I know it has been a long time that you have not been able to receive a Sacramental Communion, while having received a Spiritual Communion instead. This pains me as your pastor and shepherd. **Through prayerful discernment, I feel that the Lord wishes that our parish is to re-open. With the Bishop's blessing, I have decided to host Masses opening St. Joseph Grimsby Parish up beginning this weekend. Please note that the Mass times are different to allow for Church cleaning between Masses.**

**Saturday June 13 @ 5:00pm**

**Sunday June 14 @ 8:30am, 10:30am (no Children's Liturgy), 12:30pm and 6:30pm**

**The Live-Stream Mass will continue @ 10:30am – on the parish Facebook Page as well as later uploaded to the parish YouTube Channel.**

**Daily Masses will continue to be live streamed daily on the parish Facebook Page and YouTube channel, but there will be NO public daily Mass during the week (June 15-20) and until further notice. Weekend Masses will again take place next weekend (June 20PM – June 21).**

Please note that the Church will be only allowed to hold 30% of our capacity – therefore it will be filled as a first come, first serve to be fair to all parishioners. Once the Church has reached capacity, (30%) parishioners will be invited to attend another Mass time or enjoy the Live-streamed Mass at home.

**Catholics are still dispensed from their obligation of Sunday Mass attendance at this time, as prescribed by Bishop Bergie. Those who are considered vulnerable and those who care for them, should remain at home. People with young children are encouraged to also stay home for their safety.**

If you are feeling sick, please stay home. If you have an increased temperature, have any COVID-19 symptoms, have been in large crowds or gatherings, or have travelled, please stay at home. Families with young children are also encouraged to also stay home. Remember, the streaming Mass will still currently look after your pastoral needs.

Note – there will be guidelines and instructions for those attending Mass. While I am doing my best to make the experience of Mass as welcoming and normal as possible, we at St. Joseph are adhering to strict safety and health guidelines that are posted and will be announced by the priests, volunteers and ushers at Mass. This is for the protection of all parishioners and the priests as well.

**For the distribution of Holy Communion, the Body of Jesus will only be distributed on the bare hands (no gloves, cloths, or other items are permitted).** There will NOT be the option to receive on the tongue. This is to respect the safety of the priests and all parishioners. If this is not satisfactory for you, you are encouraged to remain at home and receive a Spiritual Communion. There will only be 2 communion stations – and Fr. Bill and myself will be the ministers of Communion. The reception of the Precious Blood of Christ at Mass for parishioners will not be available until further notice.

There are many guidelines set by the Diocese and these guidelines will be read at Mass. For those aged 3 years and older, you are asked to wear a mask for the protection of yourself and others. Hand sanitizers must be used by all who enter and leave the church. There will be no passing of the collection basket (box for drop off only), no shaking of hands or touching (wave or head nod), and no congregational singing. Music will be provided by the Music Minister and sung by the priests on the altar only. Parishioners are asked not to remain in the Church foyer and must always adhere to social distancing.

The pews will be marked, welcoming parishioners to church and there will be social distancing signs throughout the church showing you where you may sit. Families may sit together, however, everyone else must adhere to the practice of social distancing. There will be signage on the floors and pews to assist you, along with myself and the volunteers at Mass to guide you. Please understand, you will likely be sitting in a different place in the church than normal. Thank you again for your understanding and openness.

I will be asking for volunteers to assist me with ushering parishioners and cleaning after each Mass, you are asked to contact the parish office tomorrow or email myself directly – [ricopassero@gmail.com](mailto:ricopassero@gmail.com) if you wish to assist. I will need 4 volunteers for each Mass.

Again, please feel no pressure to come to Mass at this time. By re-opening the church, it allows parishioners who wish to attend, to safely do so, and those who would rather wait, can continue to join in prayer through the live-streamed Mass online or Mass on television. Please choose the option that best suits you and your family. Please again be reminded, that I am asking all parishioners to be patient, show care for one another, and adhere to all safety standards – and I thank you for that in advance.

Let us all pray for an end to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Let us continue to pray for one another and we look forward to when all restrictions will be lifted, and we can all safely gather at the altar of God again.

Be assured of my personal prayers, and I humbly rely on yours.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rico Passero', written over a faint, light-colored signature line.

Fr. Rico Passero

Pastor