

EASTER SEASON, 2020

Dear Fellow Parishioners:

After three months of not being able to celebrate Mass publicly due to the COVID-19 pandemic we are now allowed to gather again, albeit with some strict guidelines. We are so grateful for the hard work of our bishops in working with the State and local governments to make this happen. This letter is to welcome you all back and to let you know how things will progress for the time being.

1. Public Masses will begin with daily Mass, Monday, June 8. We are adding additional Masses to allow a greater flexibility for our parishioners to receive the Eucharist. Daily Mass times will be 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. until further notice.
2. Sunday Mass times are: Saturday Vigil, 5:00 p.m. (in the church & simultaneously in the parish hall); 7:30 a.m. (church only); 9:00 a.m. (church & the parish hall); 10:30 a.m. (church & the parish hall); 12:00 noon (church only).
3. For now, a maximum of 100 persons will be allowed at each venue (100 in the church and 100 in the hall). Hopefully, we will be allowed to increase this in the next few weeks.
4. In order to attend Mass, you must sign up and let us know you are coming. Only those who have signed up ahead of time will be allowed to attend. A link to "Register for Mass" will soon be placed on the home page of our parish website – www.sanrafaelparish.org, on our parish Facebook page and on the "Messages" section of our Parish App. If you do not have access to a computer to register for Mass, you may call the parish office at (858)487-4314 and we will make the reservation for you. (I know, I know but we're lucky to be allowed back in at all).
5. Facemasks must be worn to Mass. No mask, no Mass. If you forget yours the Greeters will be able to give you one which we now have in stock.
6. Sit socially spaced according to the orange dots on the pew. Families and members of the same household can sit together. Every other pew must be kept vacant.
7. Hymnals have been removed and the cantors will sing easily sung antiphons and hymns that do not require a book.
8. At the sign of peace do not shake hands. Turn and nod or wave to your neighbor. Similarly, *please do not hold hands during the Our Father.*
9. Communion will take place at the very end of Mass, following the closing prayer and final blessing. For communion please stand 6' apart coming down the aisle, which has been marked by orange dots. For communion, take off your mask, receive & consume the host and replace your mask. *Communion will be distributed in the hand only, NOT on the tongue, regardless of one's personal piety!* After you receive holy communion you walk out of church to your car *without gathering on the patio to visit.*
10. As you leave Mass ushers will be at the doors of the church holding baskets into which you can drop your offering. The offering basket will not be passed from person to person during Mass.

The obligation to attend Sunday Mass continues to be suspended for the time being. If you do not wish to come to Mass for health/safety reasons, that's okay. *If you are not feeling well, or are ill, or have underlying medical conditions or are just uneasy getting out too soon into the COVID-19 world, please remain at home.* We will continue to livestream Mass at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday until further notice for the benefit of those who cannot come to church.

We are not out of the woods of this pandemic yet. We will be successful only if everyone does his/her part to overcome it. These protocols will remain in place until such time as they are no longer necessary and we receive the "all clear" to emerge into the daylight again.

Father Niru and I really thank all of you for your patience and prayers during this very difficult time. We know it has not been easy for you to have a "fast" from receiving the eucharist imposed on you but it truly was and remains to be the Christian response to countering this deadly disease. The evil one is the source of this trouble and its purpose is to drive people away from Christ and His Church. You have not allowed Satan to be successful. You have armed yourselves with the grace of God to withstand its assault (Ephesians 6:11-17).

As in all things, this too shall pass; and when it does we will be stronger in our faith, more committed to the Church and more loyal to Christ than we were before it started. Christians throughout the centuries have edified us with their strength and endurance. Let us pray that future generations will look at and be edified by how we responded to this challenge today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis L. Mikulanic".

Msgr. Dennis Mikulanic
Pastor