

ST. ISIDORE PARISH
QUAKERTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

FR. BRABAZON'S ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 4TH 2020



Dear Friends,

The last week has brought with it a whole whirlwind of difficult breaking news, both in our own region and beyond. We have to pray and hope that the current situations of unrest throughout our nation will soon subside, and that meaningful steps will be taken by those in positions of authority to ensure the protection of the common good, the equal wellbeing and safety of all our fellow citizens (regardless of race or creed, etc.), as well as the protection of civil rights and property. We must also continue to pray for the many growing numbers of people adversely affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic. These concerns, and surely many others, continue to weigh very heavily in our hearts!

This past week has also brought with it a good measure of very positive news. You may be surprised to know how excited I was to watch live, last Saturday, as two fellow Americans lifted off from American soil in a American spacecraft, for the first time in nine years—and then, a day later, to see those men arrive safely to the International Space Station to engage in their noble mission. What a beautiful moment of pride for our country, as we look forward to the continued exploration of what lies beyond the reaches of our planet! Of course, this past week also witnessed the good news of our Governor's public re-commitment to moving the south-eastern region of our State (including Bucks County) into the next phase of re-opening, the "Yellow"/Restricted phase. That is something that I would like to discuss with you now in greater detail, especially as this movement into the "Yellow" phase effects our parish community and our likely return to public celebrations of Mass and the Sacraments.

If all goes according to plan, and the Governor does, in fact, move Bucks county into the "Yellow" phase tomorrow, Friday June 5th, the following plans will start to unfold rather quickly.

As of this coming weekend, (June 6th and 7th) with our Saturday Evening Mass and Sunday Masses, we expect to be given the opportunity to return to public celebrations of the Sacred Liturgy in our Parish Church. Please note, however, that this opportunity comes with a number of temporary revisions to our normal pattern of public gatherings. Here are quite a few items of importance that you might find helpful to be aware of:

General Norms:

- The obligation to attend Sunday Mass will continue to be dispensed for some time to come. Our Archbishop

will very publicly inform us when this obligation returns.

- Those who are currently sick in any way, recovering from illness, or otherwise have compromised health, SHOULD NOT come back to church at this time.

- During this new phase, our Church will be open for celebrations of Holy Mass and remain open only for one additional hour following Masses, for those who wish to pray privately.

- Note that on Thursdays, we will have Solemn Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament only for one hour following Mass, and Solemn Benediction will take place at 9:00 AM, after which the Church will be closed.

- As of this weekend, we are returning to our more typical schedule of daily and weekend Masses (which is outlined on our parish website and in our parish bulletin). However, for the immediate future, we will now have the addition of a 9:00 AM daily Mass on Saturdays (I was very happy to celebrate this Saturday Morning Mass throughout the last two months, and would like to experiment with retaining this Mass, for now. We'll see how it goes...)

- Our entire schedule of parish Masses will continue to be live-streamed on our parish website.

- For those who attend Mass in-person, social distancing of six feet between all individuals from different households will be required, though families living in the same household may sit together.

- Our seating in church, in accord with instructions from the PA Department of Health, will be limited to 50% of occupancy.

- Our pews have been taped off to help with the need for social distancing and to observe occupancy restrictions. Additionally, our padded chairs have been rearranged to accommodate our more senior parishioners, and others who have the genuine need to make use of them. (The reason for this will be explained further down.)

- I ask that you kindly do not re-arrange any furniture or remove any of the tape placed on pews.

- The use of face masks/coverings will be required at all times, for those who choose to attend at church, except during the reception of Holy Communion, when they will need to be removed and then immediately replaced.

Liturgical Norms for Mass:

- During this "Yellow"/Restricted Phase, we will not yet return to the scheduling of additional liturgical ministers in the sanctuary. Therefore, there will not be

any cantors, altar servers, lectors, or extraordinary ministers scheduled to assist at Masses, at the present time. This is in order to limit the number of persons handling items in the sanctuary, and to safeguard the health of our very generous liturgical ministers. As soon as it seems more prudent to move forward with scheduling liturgical ministers again, we will be sure to communicate this to them directly.

- For the time being we will refrain from singing at Mass. There is currently a growing concern about the way in which singing encourages the raising of one's voice and the further projection of droplets from one's mouth (even while wearing masks). As such, the Archdiocese has required us to suspend the use of choirs, until further notice. If singing constitutes a possible danger for our choirs, it seems equally prudent for all of us to refrain from singing for the present time. However, at our Masses where we would typically have music, we will still enjoy some instrumental sacred music at appropriate moments during and following Mass.

- Our hymnals, collection baskets, and all other items used in common have been removed from within the pews. All those who wish to make use of a resource for the Scripture Readings will have to bring their own. Every day, you can find the readings for Mass at the website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, usccb.org

- Because our collection baskets have been removed from the pews, the regular offertory collections will be gathered in large, clearly marked, and secure boxes placed within the entrances of the Church. We invite those making contributions to place their envelopes and other offerings in these donation receptacles either before or after Masses.

- Out of an abundance of caution, and to better ensure the safety of those receiving Holy Communion, as well as those distributing Holy Communion, Archbishop Pérez is asking that (during this time, and until further notice) we set aside the practice of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue. For now, those wishing to receive Holy Communion at Mass will be asked to receive on the hand.

- Those who are seated in the blue padded chairs along the back walls of the church will be invited to remain at their place to receive Holy Communion—therefore, these seats should be reserved for our more senior and infirm parishioners.

- Those who are seated in pews will be invited to process forward for the reception of Holy Communion.
- Tape has been placed on the floor, along the paths of the lines for the reception of Holy Communion; please use these guides to maintain a distance of six feet between you and the person in front of you while in line.
- We will continue to pray devotional prayers after every Mass, interceding for all those affected by the coronavirus and praying for the conclusion of the pandemic. However, as we now pray these prayers together, in a public way, they will be dramatically abbreviated, compared to what I have been praying for the last two months, and they will be limited to prayers that everyone would already know.

Sacrament of Penance:

- For the current time, we will continue celebrating Penance in the hall outside the sacristy according to the method outlined on the fourth page of our parish bulletin.
- Until further notice, scheduled confessions will only take place on Saturdays from 10:30 until 11:30 AM. (Saturday afternoon confessions are temporarily suspended.) If necessary, please contact the Parish Office to request another time to meet with me for confession.

Church Cleaning Practices:

- In accord with CDC guidelines, and for as long as it seems necessary and prudent, our church will receive a deep cleaning once a week. Additionally, all frequently used surfaces will be cleaned between all Masses and other gatherings in the Church.
- To limit our cleaning needs, for the time being, the day-chapel will not be available for use. As we determine the average attendance at Mass in the coming weeks, it may also become appropriate and necessary to tape off additional sections of pews—kindly forgive any inconveniences this may cause.

Let's pray that everything goes well during this phase and that we will continue to move forward with our return to a more normal day-to-day way of life and prayer together as a Christian community.

Be sure of my continuing prayers for you all! I very much look forward to seeing you all very soon. Please pray for me too!

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Ken

Heavenly Father, deliver us from every evil, most especially the evils of panic and fear. Strengthen us in our resolve to turn to You for everything we need, and strengthen our hope in Your lasting goodness. Stretch out Your hand of Mercy toward all who have been affected by the scourge of the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic and welcome all the dead into your lasting peace among the Saints. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Pray for us!

St. Joseph, pray for us!

St. John Neumann, pray for us!

St. Katharine Drexel, pray for us!

St. Isidore, pray for us!

And may God bless us all!
