June 1, 2021 – Feast of St. Justin Martyr

Dearest Parishioners of the Pastorate,

I hope this mailing finds you well. There are many recent announcements that have come from our bishop's office as well as here locally, and I wanted to send this mailing out to ensure that all of you were on the same page and up to date with the most current information.

Firstly, our bishop has announced that the **Dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday's and Holy Day's of Obligation due to COVID-19 will cease on Friday, June 11th, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.** This is a great moment to rejoice in the strides we have made as a nation and society to combat this pandemic, and to give thanks and praise to God. In fact, the word Eucharist is Greek for "thanksgiving". There is no greater thanks that we can give to God than to be gathered around His altar in praise, adoration and worship at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. As a result of this good news, we will discontinue the live-streaming of the Mass on Facebook Live, beginning the weekend of June 12/13. However, we will continue to keep content posted on a regular basis, particularly homilies and special events, for those who remain unable to attend, unrelated to COVID, as well as returning to our regular homebound visitations by both myself and our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. If you are or you know some one who is homebound or in a nursing home and needs to see a priest, please contact the office and let us know so I can make sure I visit them. I currently have monthly Masses scheduled at Autumn Trace nursing home in Rensselaer.

Secondly, in anticipation of the lifting of this dispensation as well as several other circumstances that have arisen in the last nine months, a revision of the weekend Mass times were discussed and we received feedback on times and locations for the Masses and the changes. While it was not possible to meet every single person's desire or preference, I am grateful for those who participated and assisted me with their feedback in this process; your comments were and are appreciated. I am very thankful.

With that being said, we are making some modifications to the weekly Mass and Confession schedule to try to make daily Mass and weekly confession more available to more people as well. Please note the weekly Mass and Confession schedule below: (**changes in bold**)

Weekend Schedule Starting June 5/6: (STA – St Augustine, SPP – Sts. Peter and Paul)

Saturday Eve: **4:30pm CT MASS - STA** (**Confessions after Mass**)
Sunday Morning: 7:30am CT MASS - SPP (**Confessions prior 6:45-7:15am CT**)
Sunday Morning: 10:00am CT MASS - STA

Weekday Mass Schedule Starting June 7

Monday: No Mass
Tuesday: 5:30pm CT MASS STA, (Confessions to follow Mass until 6:30pm)
Wednesday: **Noon CT** MASS STA, (**Confessions before Mass 11:15-11:45am**)
Thursday: 8:30am CT MASS STA (**no Confessions**)
Friday: 8:30am CT MASS STA (**8:15am when school is in session**) (**no Confessions**)

Other Monthly Prayer and Confession Opportunities

First Saturday of the Month, 9am CT MASS STA, Confessions to follow
First Thursday Confessions at Sacred Heart Fulcher Center: 6pm-7pm ET
First Sunday Adoration: SPP After Mass - 3pm ET/2CT, Confessions 1:30-2:30 ET.
First Friday Adoration: STA After Mass - 5pm CT

Thirdly, last week Bishop Doherty lifted many of the COVID restrictions on the liturgy that were set to try to mitigate the spread of the virus during our return to worship a year ago and our ramping up back to more normal worship in our churches. This is great news for many who have been looking forward to this day. However, I do understand that some remain hesitant and wish to still remain cautious about the potential presence of the virus or other pathogens present in our churches. Therefore, in accordance with the diocesan directives and our own local situation we will continue to adhere to the following practices:

- Distribution of the Precious Blood from a common chalice remains suspended.
- Hand sanitizer and masks will be provided for the faithful at entrances of churches for those who wish to use them.
- Masks are no longer mandatory if you have been vaccinated, per county and state guidelines but continue to remain optional for any who wish to wear them.
- Congregational singing will resume.
- Sign of Peace should take place without physical contact to those outside of your household (ex: bow of the head or a wave to others).
- Hand sanitizer will be used by Clergy and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion before and after distribution of Holy Communion.
- Masks will continue to be worn by priests and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion for the distribution of Holy Communion, for the time being.
- Holy Water fonts will be emptied after weekend Masses, cleaned and refilled as needed throughout the week.
- The gifts of bread and wine will continue to be brought directly from the credence table to the altar and not in procession.
- At St. Augustine, the side chapel will continue to be designated for vulnerable or cautious persons only, and masks are required in the chapel. This space is NOT to be used for late arrivals or as a cry room.

The month of June also has me away from the pastorate for several obligations which necessitate the need to cancel several weekday Confession and Mass times. **Please note these dates when there will be NO Mass or Confessions this Month**:

- **June 7 – 11 (M-F)**
  - I will be gone for our annual Diocese Priest Convocation and our Pastorate Confirmation Retreat
- **June 21 – 25 (M-F)**
  - I will be gone on vacation
- **June 28 – 30 (M-F)**
  - I will be at a continuing education workshop put on by the University of Notre Dame for Pastors with Schools

If there is an emergency during these dates, please do not hesitate to call the office and the emergency line, as arrangements will be made for emergency situations that arise. If you or a loved one is sick and would like to see a priest, again, please contact the office so I can come visit and bring you the sacraments, especially Confession and Anointing, while I am here in town.

Lastly, thank you all for the thoughts and prayers you have extended to me and my family for my father. I was away last weekend on a last-minute trip to visit him, together with my brother and sister, as he continues his battle with cancer. His illness may require me to make another unscheduled trip home, but rest assured that we will make sure that things are covered here in the Pastorate if my absence is required.



Father Bennett

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus – Have Mercy On Us!
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sts. Joseph, Michael, Peter, Paul and Augustine – Pray For Us