



Life in Phase II

Hello Milton Catholics, the journey continues and Summer is here! I hope that everyone has been in good health. Lately I have been hearing from parishioners about how their lives are going in Phase II. Much needed doctor visits and follow-ups are having and necessary surgeries are finally being scheduled. I also have a list of special intentions of those who are battling a cancer diagnosis or other complicated illnesses. Let's not under estimate God's power when we pray to Him. In my late night prayers, I continue to pray for those who remain out of work and who might be facing financial hardships.

Back in the parish we continue to follow the Bishop's guidelines for safe distance and maintaining limited seating. His dispensation, removing the obligation to attend Sunday Mass in a Church continues but keep in mind that Mass will continue. I've learned as much as we need grocery necessities like bread and milk and chocolate chip cookies (at times), as Catholics we need our sacraments most desperately. Our prayer is the eradication of this virus and safety to come to our state. Of course those keeping Sunday home and continuing to stay-at-home, you remain part of our Church family. The 10:30 AM Sunday live stream will continue indefinitely. Thank you to the parishioners of St. Joseph for increasing your giving, allowing us to pay for these monthly subscriptions with greater ease and maintain the parish.

Next May 1, 2021 the Bishop has selected our St. Joseph Church for the closing Mass of the holy year of St. Joseph, perhaps we can have a big celebration that day!

Daily Masses and Confession

We'll have to stick to our Phase I and II Mass schedule a bit longer. As much as I miss our 6:30 AM Mass, 8:30 AM is helpful for those who wish to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist in a less crowded environment. Mass here is **Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 8:30 AM**, confessions immediately follow in the Cry Room. Confessions are at the normal time on Saturday from 3 to 3:30 PM and Sunday beginning at 4:15 PM in the Cry Room.

Less Signs and Instructions Ahead

You may have noticed at the Sunday Masses that I removed the signs and seating guides that helped us find safe distant seating. I still ask that if you come by yourself or as a couple, to try to fill in the single chairs first. If you are sitting on an end of a pew, please help others who are trying to find a safe distancing seat. For example if one or two people sits on the end of a pew, a family of four can still fit in the middle. Please, assist them by either pushing down or politely standing to the side rather than have people crawl through your personal space. Last Sunday seemed to work great that way, making safe room for a good amount of people! Really, I think that's about it. Watching our distance in lines, etc and using the restrooms only in an emergency and leaving nothing behind in your pews helps things run smoothly.

Holy Communion

Eventually I will be taking away the "fine print" instructions I give at certain points in the Mass since we are already accustomed to what's necessary. Remember for the Our Father prayer, our hands are not extended as the priests hands nor should they be clasped to the person next to you. Remember the analogy I gave of our hands inside God's hands as we pray His prayer. That way we are all truly in communion. Our sign of peace can be a smile in the parking lot or upon entering or walking back to our cars.

The Bishop has specifically asked each pastor to have a method in which those receiving communion can either receive on the tongue as taught by the Church and the alternate method, reverent reception in the hand. Both ways are perfectly acceptable and fine here at St. Joseph. The only change is that if you wish to receive on the tongue, I ask you to slip into my line for communion. I will give communion via placement in the hand or on the tongue in my line. This goes without saying, if you do not want to receive after I have administered communion on the tongue, simply slip into Deacon Keith's line.

Outside Front Plaza

As we are unable to use our Gathering Space for normal conversation and visiting, please remember that on the front plaza and under the Oaks you certainly can stay to visit with others. The Bishop (via the CDC) asks that we keep the entrance/exits free from conversations and contact. You are certainly welcome and encouraged by me to stay and visit on Church grounds in the open air.

Feeding the Seminarian

This past weekend, we welcomed Eric Hernandez, the seminarian sponsored by Our Lady of Wisdom who is residing here for the summer. Very special thanks to the families who have already brought meals to help feed him (and myself). We appreciate it. He's a grateful eater, but easy on the vegetables (smiles) please. He's still a young guy who appreciates chicken

tenders, hamburgers, bbq, sandwiches, pizza, etc. Any type of pre seasoned Nunu's style meats or boneless style chicken or wings is a good option. Breakfast is one of his favorite meals too.

Sacrament of Confirmation for 2021

Those students entering their junior year of high school may now begin registration for the 2021 Confirmation Program. This program replaces the 11th grade of catechism in the public school or private non Catholic schools and is required for those who attend Catholic schools. The program has different start dates and ending dates and since there are very few classroom sessions, attendance is mandatory as well as mass attendance all year. Please consider these responsibilities before registering. The sacrament of Confirmation is a serious commitment. An absolute deadline will be in early September but registering now helps us in our planning.

Many Thanks

Many thanks to those who have stayed after Mass to sanitize the pews. We can always use helpers. Also, I am grateful to our very small but mighty staff of volunteer ushers, but as the older generation must still be in quarantine, we can always use more helpers. If you see that there are only two ushers with stick baskets, feel free to grab two of the other stick baskets and join them. No playing lacrosse with the stick baskets allowed! (smiles)

The dedication many of you have stepped up to in tithing has been very admirable, working to keep our parish in a very healthy position. The online giving option is beginning to be well received by our younger families who are just learning how to tithe and seeing the spiritual benefits. (<https://diolaf.org/online-parish-giving>) Of course the greatest gift that you can give back to God is your faithfulness. I love spotting it on Sundays!

My Brother Bryan

Many of you have asked for updates on Bryan and for those of you just joining the parish, Bryan is my 38 year old younger brother who is a heart patient, diabetic, and receives scheduled dialysis for end stage kidney failure. Bryan suffered at a young age with uncontrolled diabetes and recently a medical trauma. He's been living across town in handicap apartments owned by our diocese. I am his caregiver and through all of his difficulties he rarely complains. He was certainly a moving target with the COVID-19 virus, so prayers continue for his safety. Unable to undergo a bypass surgery at the beginning of the pandemic, Bryan is facing some heart complications trying to still his spirit. Our current plan of care is to undergo a series of stent placements this year, a little at a time. Thanks for your support, concerns, and prayers. I'm currently on the hunt for a simple affordable minivan as the getting his wheelchair in and out of my Ford Fusion is starting to put a strain on my lower back. I'm open to any leads you may have on pre owned minivans.

Have a great week everyone!

Fr. William Schambough