



ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

May 2020

Hello Assumption of the BVM family,

I pray that you and your loved ones are healthy. As you may have seen, Bishop Richard Pates recently shared our multi-phased plan for reopening churches in the Diocese of Joliet. Specifically, Phase I allows for parishes to reopen for Baptism, Reconciliation, Weddings and Funerals with a limit of TEN attendees and Phase IA allows for parishes to reopen for private prayer and adoration with a limit of TEN attendees. Phase II allows for reopening for weekday and weekend Masses for larger groups depending on the guidelines which will be issued by the State of Illinois at a later date, and the capacity of the church building.

Our Assumption of the BVM Catholic Church Parish Reopening Plan first and foremost, will prioritize the safety and well-being of all while maintaining due respect and reverence for the sacraments and liturgical norms of our faith. I will assemble a Parish Reopening Leadership Team with parishioner co-captains to lead our efforts. Together, we will participate in required training from the Diocese to ensure that our parish reopening plan conforms to the guidelines developed by the Diocese of Joliet in collaboration with civil and healthcare authorities. We will also obtain protective and cleaning supplies, as well as guidance on purchasing/maintaining supplies ongoing.

Volunteers Needed

To open, we must have volunteers to assist with various aspects of our parish reopening plan. Importantly, leadership team members and volunteers must not be part of a “vulnerable population” (no underlying medical condition such as diabetes; lung disease; undergoing cancer treatment, etc.). It is recommended that those over the age of 60 should consult with the Parish Leadership Team about possibly serving as a volunteer. I ask all of you who are younger than 60 and healthy with no underlying health conditions to consider assisting with one of three reopening teams. I especially encourage high school, college students, as well as young adults to serve and volunteer for teams. **Again, please understand, we cannot enter into any of these opening stages without a number of volunteers, who will be trained and certified.**

- **We need a Set-up team.** Sample duties include ensuring that all supplies needed for each sacramental celebration/gathering are ready for use, entrances and exits are marked and prepped physically open prior to attendees’ arrival/departure, windows are opened, etc.
- **We need a Meet and Greet team.** Sample duties include assisting in managing the flow of congregants as they enter the church, making sure attendees use hand sanitizer upon entering, are wearing a mask, and are reminded not to enter if ill; directing people to appropriate seating/waiting areas, etc.
- **We need a Cleaning team.** Sample duties include maintaining and cleaning essential and trafficked areas of the church before and after the church has been used. Masks and gloves will be provided, if you do not have your own, in addition to approved cleaning/disinfecting supplies.



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The Reopening Leadership Team and I will make sure that all volunteers are properly trained. Please call the parish office at (815) 634-4171 or send us a message at secretary@assumptionparish.org to indicate your willingness and ability to volunteer. From those that step forward, we will also request that some act as volunteer captains to help lead each of the three teams. Once we have committed volunteers a training session will be required of everyone. Once this training is complete, the parish will be able to offer once again better public celebrations of Baptisms, Funerals, and Weddings, as well as private opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as well as private prayer within our church building.

As a parish and a Diocese, we together will move forward at a pace and timing appropriate for our situation in Illinois. Again, the need for parishioner assistance cannot be overstated. Because we must limit the number of attendees to minimize the risk of the spread of disease, and in order to avoid “turning people away” at our doors, we have established an online registration system that will be found on our website at <https://www.stmaryassumptionparish.org/>. We are encouraging parishioners to visit this page so that we know how many attendees to expect at gatherings to avoid overcrowding. We ask you to be patient as we establish this new system, and further ask that you be understanding as we try to make the sacraments, prayer gatherings and eventually Masses available to all who wish to attend under these limitations.

It is good to note that we do this together as from the first pages of Scripture we learn that we indeed are “our brother’s keeper.” Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed, “that they all may be one” (Jn 17:21) and commanded us “love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (Jn 13:34). Our collective patience, willingness to help and the care we take to reopen is a demonstration of our unity and love for one another.

May God grant you His peace during this difficult time and may He manifest His love and presence to you in abundant ways. If you have any questions, please contact our parish secretary, Tricia DiChristofano, at (815) 634-4171.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Noesen