



Our Lady of Fatima Parish & Parish School

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Huntington, WV 25705
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Dear Members of Our Lady of Fatima Parish and those living within its boundaries,

I pray you are doing well and that you and your family and friends are all healthy.

Bishop Brennan has recently approved a plan submitted to him by me for the opening of the OLOF church, beginning next weekend May 23/24, 2020.

MAJOR POINTS:

The faithful of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further notice

Parishioners in the vulnerable category (elderly, existing heart or lung conditions, have diabetes, or are otherwise immuno-compromised, anyone who is sick or with any form of a cough) are encouraged to remain at home: those who are fearful about attending Mass because of the spread of the Coronavirus should remain at home.

MASKS ARE MANDATORY FOR ENTRANCE TO INTO THE CHURCH.

Anyone attending Mass must wear a mask/face covering which covers the nose and the mouth. (Except when they consume the host.). *[All parishioners will be expected to bring their own mask for the masses.]*

- The seating capacity of the church is limited to **75** persons to allow for social distancing. The balcony (choir loft) will be closed.
- **New Mass times** -- to accommodate social distancing and the sanitization of the church:
 - **Saturday: 5:00 PM; 6:30 PM**
 - **Sunday: 8:00 AM; 9:30 AM; 11:00 AM; 6:30 PM**
 - **Spanish masses will resume July 12**
- All attending mass are asked to make a reservation with the office with: Name; desired mass time; # of persons in group. E-mails will receive confirmation replies.
Phone (304) 525-0866 M-Th 8-2 / E-mail: reservations@olofatima.org M-Th anytime. This will allow us to space the community appropriately. The Ushers will have the list of reservations and be responsible for escorting/assigning families to an appropriate pew.
- **All persons with reservations will need to be present prior to the official mass starting time.** *(Ideally five minutes before.)*
- **All persons must enter the nave through the NORTH entrance. (Main entrance facing Norway Avenue. ADA exempted)**
- There are to be no social gatherings before or after Mass. This includes congregating in the vestibule of the church, on the steps of the church or in the church parking lot.
- No doubt these plans are not perfect, all options come with a host of new difficulties and challenges. I pray you will be patient and flexible as we work out these new routines.

*For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve
and give His life as a ransom for many. – Mark 10:45*

Additional notes:

- Members of a single household do not need to practice physical distancing with each other and so may sit together in the same row.
- The number of people seated in a pew will be determined by household groupings and social distancing. Ushers will be responsible for maintaining the seating balance with social distancing. You may not be able to sit in your “normal” pew. Please be flexible during this transition period.
- Persons without a reservation will be seated only after the designated mass time on a space available basis.
- Seating will begin approximately 15 minutes prior to mass time. Only those assisting the community in ministry will be permitted to enter earlier, all others will be asked to wait in their vehicles until the proper time.
- Instead of passing the collection basket, large baskets will be placed in the main aisle next to the first pews, on the right and the left. As people process to Holy Communion, they may deposit their envelopes or cash in the baskets.
- The distribution of the Precious Blood to the laity is suppressed until further notice. *[At OLOF there are three persons known to have Celiac Disease. We will have separate cups for them to receive the Precious Blood.]*
- **Holy Communion may not be received with gloves.** The recipient retains the right to receive Eucharist on the hand or tongue.
- After mass, ushers will dismiss people row by row starting from the pews that are closest to the center aisle exit. There are to be no social gatherings after Mass. *[When you exit church please go directly to your vehicle and prepare to leave the parking lot.]*

Sanitization

- Hand sanitizers are located by each entrance, even though only the North entrance will be used, in addition there will be bottles of sanitizers for the ministers.
- After mass, sanitizing agents will be in 12 spray bottles for use. We have pairs of vinyl gloves available for all those sanitizing the church. We ask for up to 12 individuals to be responsible for the sanitizing of the church, or proportional number of persons based on attendance. The process of sanitization is expected to take 20 minutes
- The ushers and pastor will oversee the sanitization process.
- Those wishing to light votive candles will be required to bring their own matches.

As your pastor I am aware of many of the challenges and issues we will face as we restart our active participation in our church. **We will need additional volunteers as ushers, lectors, cantors, and sanitizers to maintain the safety of all the parishioners.**

Please continue to pray for those affected by COVID19 and above all pray that these measures will be short lived, and our Eucharistic celebration will be “normal” again very soon.

Peace and Love,

