

Dear Friends in Christ,

This is one of those messages that put a big smile on my face as I type it 😊 . Even though I have to bring to your attention some specific policies and reopening procedures and even though I know this is not a laughing matter, my heart rejoices. I will be able to personally welcome you back to our church again. The joy of that fact is great and it definitely outgrows anything else that needs to be communicated at this time. So, **WELCOME BACK!**



In addition to our **Diocesan guidelines** there are a few things I'd like to bring to your attention that specifically pertains to our particular situation, here at the Divine Infant. I strongly encourage you to read everything that came out from our Archdiocese as well as my messages, including this one. Our ushers will **verify this with you**, as you come to Mass, by simply confirming with you that you have read those guidelines, so please don't be surprised upon hearing that question.

GENERAL RULES

Our aim is not to police anyone but to assist you, to make sure that you and your loved ones feel as safe and as comfortable as possible. These days it means that we are required to keep certain norms and safety regulations in place and to follow them at all times. I truly believe that our attitude and particular conduct should be motivated by our love for the Eucharist and care for our neighbour; these days we are truly our brother's keeper. The commandment of love, especially the part that speaks about loving our neighbour as ourselves takes up a whole new meaning at this time of common struggle and challenge. Together, let's make the best out of it, let us not be discouraged but rather move forward even against some challenging odds.



Please apply some good judgement and simple common sense to each given situation. **Monitor yourself for COVID-19 symptoms.** Measure your temperature frequently, make sure that your health condition does not put you or others at an unnecessary risk.

Our church, at this time, is not completely suited for seniors, especially those of you with mobility problems or some serious health issues that under normal circumstances would be possible to accommodate. Everyone will be required to stay in their pews and not to walk around or move around freely to address, for example, your back problems. Leaning against the edge of the pews as you line up for Holy Communion will also not be possible. It is strongly recommended not to touch any surfaces other than necessary. Consequently, mobility problems might be quite difficult to accommodate. Dear Young Families, your little ones, as much joy as they bring to our church, may, in these situations and given these particular requirements, cause you much unnecessary and unneeded stress and upset, so please plan ahead.

Please arrive at the church no earlier than 30mins and no later than 5mins before the scheduled time. For confession time look under the "Confessions" paragraph. I urge you not to come at the very last moment. Come earlier and give yourself enough time to be seated. Look around and familiarize with this somewhat "new" environment. Use our weekend Mass registration system every week as instructed.



Everyone is asked to **bring your own masks and gloves**, make sure that your nose and mouth are fully covered. It is required that in situations where public distancing is not 100% possible, we should use them. Believe me, as I know life, we will run into these situations (entering the church, getting to your pew, lining up for the Communion, etc.). Bring it with you, use it as needed. It is better safe than sorry. Certain situations and services will call for mandatory use of masks and gloves in order to have access to it (Confession, votive candles, washrooms).

On weekends, as you come to Mass, **follow the instructions of our ushers**; they will be prepared to take good care of you. You will be directed to a specific seat. Please respect this, as your **personal sitting preference, at this time, will not be possible** to be accommodated. In addition, with the assistance of our ushers we have placed some very helpful instructions inside and outside of the church in different prominent spots or places of importance. Please, read them carefully as they explain a lot and will give you some practical information.

WASHROOMS

Church washrooms are restricted to **use when absolutely necessary or in cases of emergency only.** More detailed instructions are posted outside of each washroom. Please plan ahead and think very carefully if your particular situation or health condition will allow you to observe this serious and strict restriction. If not, I really don't want for anyone to feel very uncomfortable. Therefore, I ask you to consider staying home and maybe wait for these restrictions to be changed or completely lifted. This calls for your good judgement and honest self-assessment.



BLESSED SACRAMENT CHAPEL, VOTIVE CANDLES AND STATUES



The maximum capacity for our Blessed Sacrament Chapel is, at this time, four people. If you would like to have a quick visit and offer a **short prayer**, please do so only **after** Mass. Be mindful of other parishioners and don't extend your visit for too long. I do not intend to keep anyone away from the Blessed Sacrament, so our Chapel will remain open and accessible, just be aware of others and allow for them to have their personal moment of adoration as well.

Our votive candle areas and statues are also available **after** Mass only. **Use your masks and gloves** as you move around to light a candle or offer a short prayer in front of the statue. Pay attention to others who might be waiting behind you to approach.

CONFESSIONS

I am pleased to inform you that our confessionals are open and the Sacrament of Reconciliation is available. We made it safe and everyone can use it. Our space allows for **four people only** to be lined up but you can join the confession line coming from your pew as it moves along. More instructions are posted outside the confessional.

Confession time is:

On weekends, Saturdays and Sundays from 4:15pm to 4:45pm.

During weekdays, 30mins before each Mass.



CELEBRATION OF THE MASS



We will follow all the guidelines we received from the Archdiocese. At Divine Infant Church you will notice that the priest is accompanied by the deacon. These are the only two people that will be on the main sanctuary distributing Holy Communion on both sides in front of the altar.

At Communion, please **stay in your pews until directed** by the ushers to line up in single file down the center isle of the church. Avoid touching the pews as you leave them and as you walk towards the altar. As the priest says "The Body of Christ" please respond with the usual "Amen" keeping your 2 meters distance from the priest or Deacon. Once the dialog is over, remove your mask and approach with arms extended and palms nested facing up, receive and consume the Host, and return to your pew, observing physical distancing with others.

At this time **Holy Communion will be offered only on the hand**. Our bishops are working very hard to make it available on the tongue as well. I hope this will be possible soon as I know a good number of you prefer this option. Until then, let us show a little bit of humility and obedience and accept things as they are.

To those of you with **allergies to gluten** we can offer, at this time, a "low gluten" host. Please make necessary arrangements with one of the **ushers or the sacristan before** Mass.

For those with a **SEVERE gluten allergy (zero gluten tolerance)**: communion from a chalice is now available. If you have a **severe** gluten allergy and would like to receive the Precious Blood, please make arrangements for this directly with the **priest or the deacon before** Mass.

You will also notice that all the readings will be offered by one lector only. As well, only one person will play and sing hymns, the responsorial psalm and the Gospel Acclamation. As you know, **singing is not permitted**; consequently the whole Mass will be recited with the exceptions mentioned above.

WEEKDAY MASSES

No registration is required for weekday Masses. Our crowd, I believe, will be relatively small so ushers will not be present. Everyone is asked to enter through the side (office) door, sanitize, keep your public distancing and help yourselves to the designated sitting spots. One thing I would like to ask you for is that you sit in the same section or sections that are next to each other. This will help us a lot with sanitizing and the cleaning process. **All weekday Masses will be offered as per our usual schedule. Confessions will be available 30mins before each Mass. We will also have our usual Adorations of the Blessed Sacrament.**

OK, THAT IS ALL I WANTED TO SAY! PLEASE, READ IT CAREFULLY, TOGETHER WITH OTHER OFFICIAL GUIDELINES WE POSTED ON OUR PARISH WEBSITE. IT MAY SEEM TO BE A LOT TO PROCESS BUT TRUST ME, ONCE YOU START COMING TO THE MASS, IT WILL ALL MAKE GOOD SENSE AND I AM SURE WE WILL ALL GET USE TO IT IN NO TIME.

In Christ,

Fr. Waldemar Pallon