

July 16, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

As we enter into these “dog days” of summer, I am hoping all is well with you and your families. We certainly deserve to enjoy these warm days of summer, especially because we have gone through a lot these past few months. The twelve weeks where we had no public Sunday Masses was a trying and very painful one I am sure for all of us. I am so happy we have been able to celebrate the Mass once again.

There is concern with the rise in COVID-19 cases these past several weeks. Here at St. Pius X, we are doing everything we can to ensure that our worship space is as sanitary as possible. After every Mass, our maintenance crew is sanitizing all the pews. Our pews are also marked for social distancing. Many of you are assisting us by wearing masks at Mass for the safety of all. However, I have decided that beginning this weekend, **July 18-19, all will be required to wear masks** if you wish to be seated in the main Church proper. We have plenty of masks here, free of charge, for you to wear if you do not have your own or forgot to bring one. It is a small cross to bear for the sake of all.

If you choose not to wear a mask, we will certainly not deny you a ending Mass or receiving Holy Communion, but the ushers will be seeing you in the North Narthex. I realize this is not an ideal way to celebrate Mass, but I deem it necessary until further notice. Please cooperate with the ushers. We want the church proper to be as safe a place as possible, and wearing masks add to this level of safety. Please understand that this is for the common good of all.

I list three simple reasons for doing this:

- It is for everyone’s safety. As I mentioned, better to err on the side of caution.
- I do not want to endure another Church/public Mass closure. We risk this if someone gets sick here at St. Pius X.
- I do not want to get sick. You need a priest. If I get sick, I will not be able to leave the Rectory. Our Diocese has no priests to spare at the present moment. I also am the primary caregiver of my 85-year-old mother who lives with me. Who will take care of her if I get sick?

We need to be humble about this and lay aside any personal feelings, politics, etc. We need to be concerned for the safety of all who are taking a risk coming to Church. In addition, it is always better to err on the side of caution rather than imprudence.

I thank all of you for your assistance in this matter. I fear that if things do not improve in our area, Churches may be shut down again, which is the last thing any of us want; especially if someone a ending Mass here contracts the virus. I desire that we remain healthy, safe and a people living not in fear but with faith and common sense.

For the health, safety and well-being of our guests and communities, please follow these guidelines:

- **We are now requiring you to wear a mask at all Masses.**
 - If you do not wear a mask you will be seated in the North Narthex.
 - Weekend Masses: Please wait to be seated by an Usher
- **We are now requiring you to wear a mask in the Parish and Faith Formation Offices.**
 - Masks are available at all entrances of the Offices.
- Enter at your own risk.
- Holy Communion CANNOT be taken out of Church.

As always, you are in my prayers daily. Please stay safe and healthy. Moreover, continue to enjoy these beautiful days of summer.

God bless – Fr. Jim, Pastor