



Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Please find below some information and thoughts concerning our reopening of the parish and our Engaging Disciples Initiative as well as our recent celebrations of 1st Communion and Confirmation.
Peace,
Fr. Mike

Lifting the Dispensation of participating in the Sunday Eucharist

As you can see by the letter attached (<http://tinyurl.com/ye42psq9>), the Bishops of New Jersey have discerned that it is appropriate that we as a church take the next step in returning to normalcy and reopening our parishes. The extenuating circumstances of the COVID pandemic have decreased sufficiently for us that the dispensation from participation in the Sunday Eucharist is no longer necessary as a general exception. As the letter mentions and as is the general norm, there may be personal or individual situations in which the obligation to participate in the Sunday Eucharist may not apply such as illness or close contact with someone who has tested positive for the COVID virus and other circumstance. When in doubt please err on the side of caution.

It is important to recognize the great benefit of gathering together as a community of faith to celebrate the Eucharist. While the ability to participate on some level from home was a great asset during the pandemic, it was not the same, on many levels, of being at mass in person. Many of our parishioners have expressed great joy at being able to come back and participate in person. Some are not ready quite yet. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the office or one of our priests to discuss your particular situation.

At this time please be aware that the sign up for masses is still in place as is the requirement to wear a mask over your mouth and nose, as well as the need for social distancing. There are still many steps to take before we can return to “normal” so I ask for and encourage you to be patient, charitable and understanding as we journey towards fully reopening our church and our community. We will continue to livestream our masses and other special events for the time being.

Engaging Disciples: Update on Parish Pastoral Council

A few weeks ago I announced the continuing progress of the Engaging Disciples Initiative and the planning for a Parish Pastoral Council. It was my hope to announce the Pastoral Council this weekend as part of our celebration of Pentecost. Unfortunately, it has taken a little longer than expected for me to have the necessary discussions with our potential members. These discussions have been very fruitful in discerning the potential of a pastoral council, as well as generating great enthusiasm and great ideas for our parish community. It is my hope to have this completed this week so that we can introduce our new pastoral council in the next few weeks.

Peace,
Fr. Mike

1st Communion and Confirmation

This weekend we will celebrate the last of our Confirmations. I ask that you congratulate the young people of our parish whose faith has been confirmed through this sacrament. I would also ask that you congratulate those who have celebrated their 1st Communion. These are great celebrations in the life of the young parishioners and their families as well as our parish community. Please keep them in your prayers. Thank you to all: families, volunteers, staff and our entire parish community, for your help and prayers for these young parishioners of Immaculate Heart of Mary.