



July 7, 2020

Hello my brothers and sisters in Christ,

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you and with your family. This weekend at St. John the Divine Parish we experienced our first Sunday Mass since the temporary suspension of public Masses in our diocese due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This Mass appeared a bit different than what we are use to: there was no music or singing of any kind, and seating was according to social distancing. We also had a number of volunteers, making sure our parish is following the protocols, and directives that the diocese has stipulated. Overall I have to say, it was a beautiful witness of Faith. Though we were small in number, due to social distance requirements, the people of God experienced the joy of participating in the Mass and being able to receive the Eucharist.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many people that made this possible. Our volunteers who stepped up into the breach, and a special thanks to Brian, Bridget, Nives, and Pam who not only helped to keep our parishes spiritually uplifted during this pandemic, but also helped with the re-opening of our Church. Thank You! On behalf of the parish team we invite you to come back to Mass if you are able to attend. If there is a serious medical condition, if you are elderly, if you are worried or anxious, or there are any other reasons why you can't join us physically, we understand. Our Bishop has dispensed us from our Sunday obligation until the First Sunday of Advent, which means you have been spiritually looked after. You can also continue to watch our streaming of Mass found on our website at stjtd.ca.

For those of you who are open to attend, what you will find is a church that is ready to receive you – you do not have to register online or book a spot over the phone, we at St. John the Divine have a first come first serve policy. Please just come and be patient as you line up, and our volunteers receive you at the front doors. You will be asked some basic questions and then be ushered to your seat. It will feel a bit different, but at the same time it will feel remarkably familiar, because the Lord is with us especially in the Eucharist. This is Christ's real presence for us. If you are finding life burdensome; come to the oasis of your Faith, come to meet the one who refreshes us and brings us to calm waters.

At the end of Mass our volunteers will ensure the Church is properly sanitized, as we take this seriously as St. John the Divine Parish. Thanks to a generous donator, as we purchased a disinfectant fogger, which disinfects all surfaces in a matter of seconds and dries within minutes. The chemical that is used in the Church is all natural, and requires no masks or gloves and its breathable. This is sprayed after each individual Mass, and allows our worship space to be properly sanitized. We as a parish team have put all of our effort into re-opening our parish because we love the Lord with all our hearts, souls and minds, and our neighbours as ourselves. May the peace of Christ be with all of you, and for those of you who are going to be entering the doors of St. John the Divine in the following weeks we say Welcome Home!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Don Pumputis

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