

Date June 11, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Holy Name of Mary Parish,

I pray that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy during this most challenging time. Know that you have been in my daily prayers, along with the sick, those who have been called home to the Lord and our front-line health care and essential workers.

You may have heard that soon we will be able to re-open our churches once again. We are thankful as this time of closure has been painful and difficult. As we implement our re-opening plans, we must do so with prudence and caution, ensuring that we do everything possible to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

As you can expect, things will look a little different when we return to church. For that reason, I'm including a few guidelines to help us understand what things will look like. Yes, these are uncomfortable practices and they may seem overly restrictive - I understand that. However, to keep everyone as safe as possible, we must all do our part and make the best of this challenging situation.

One of the biggest challenges is that, to re-open, we must do so in phases where our capacity will be limited at this time to 65 parishioners per Mass due to directives from the Province's medical experts. This represents 30% of our church capacity while maintaining physical distancing

Attached are "guidelines" to give you a better sense of what you can expect and how you can help out before you arrive at church, when you arrive and at points in between. We'll offer reminders/signs when you are here but it's good to review these guidelines at this time.

One key point that I would like to highlight is that the diocese, after consulting with the Chief Medical Officer for the Province, is asking that all those (over the age of 3) who come to church wear a mask/face covering to mitigate the potential spread of the virus. While not mandatory, they are highly recommended. Again, I recognize this is uncomfortable but it is out of care and love for our neighbour. Please follow this direction and bring a mask/face covering with you when you return to church.

Finally, I invite you to consider how you might share your time and talents as a volunteer. The many tasks required for re-opening are significant and we need more volunteers than ever to help. If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Susan at office@hnomalmonte.ca or 613-256-1034.

Our joy of re-opening churches is measured with the restrictions that will be required. However, returning to sacramental life and gathering as a community is sustenance essential for our faith community during these trying days.

I look forward to welcoming you back soon - be assured that you remain in my prayers each day.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Paul Gaudet
Holy Name of Mary Parish

GUIDELINES FOR RE-OPENING OF HOLY NAME OF MARY PARISH

As you know, the Government of Ontario has given churches permission to re-open starting June 12, 2020 on a limited basis. Holy Name of Mary Parish will start re-opening on Saturday June 13, 2020 with the 4:30pm Mass.

As you have experienced with the re-opening of stores and other businesses, the experience is not what it was prior to Covid-19. The same will be true about our Sunday Masses. Many of our practices and ways of conducting ourselves will be different. In order to help you prepare for these changes the following measures will be taken for the health and safety of everyone.

The re-opening is limited to 30% of the church's capacity and must respect physical distancing. This means that in a practical sense we will be able to accommodate approximately 65 parishioners at each Mass. As all of our Sunday Masses generally have an average attendance over 100 people, we will need to limit the number of parishioners attending any given Mass.

In an attempt to accommodate as many parishioners as possible and to avoid turning people away, **parishioners who wish to attend Mass will need to register for the Mass they wish to attend. To do so you will need to send an email to Susan at office@hnomalmonte.ca or call the office at 613-256-1034 and indicate how many people are coming, the Mass you wish to attend and the names of each person, no later than Thursday at 3:00pm for the upcoming weekend.** (For this weekend June 13 & 14 the deadline to register is Friday at 3:00pm.) You will be informed whether or not there is space. We understand that this is not a normal church practice and an added burden to those who wish to attend Mass but the health and safety of all who attend is the priority of the parish.

Registration will allow us to properly prepare the church and to have records if contact tracing is ever needed. Please note that you may not be able to sit in your usual or preferred seat because of physical distancing requirements. Families and households living at the same residence are permitted to sit together but all other parishioners are required to follow physical distancing. Pews will be marked to indicate where people can sit.

We ask that anyone who is not feeling well or is sick, have a compromised immune system or is vulnerable due to age or health conditions not attend Mass. Please check temperature of all family members before coming to church. If any family members have a fever, please remain home for the health and safety of all. Consult your family doctor.

If you exhibit any of the following symptoms, please remain home at this time - cough, fatigue, loss of appetite, shortness of breath, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, headache, runny nose, sore throat, chills with shakes.

The dispensation from attending Sunday Mass is still in effect so you do not have to worry if you are unable to or feel uncomfortable about attending or going out in public. To accommodate these parishioners and due to our limited capacity we will continue to record and post the Sunday Mass on our website.

For everyone's health and safety the following measures will be in place for everyone attending Mass. There will **only be one entrance** into the church via the side door. We ask that **all parishioners wear a mask**, if possible. Prior to entering the church, **everyone will have their temperature checked**. If you have a fever you will not be allowed in the church. This is for everyone's safety. Your **name will be checked off the list of registered parishioners** and ensure that there is a contact number or email. You will be asked to **drop off your donation envelope** at that time. We would however encourage parishioners to use e-transfer or PayPal to help reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19. **All parishioners will sanitize their hands**. Hand sanitizer will be provided.

Once Mass has begun no more parishioners will be permitted to enter the church building. This is to allow those doing the screening to attend Mass. Only one exit will be used at the end of Mass via the main door. This is to maintain good traffic flow and help everyone respect physical distancing. Pews will be sanitized between Masses.

If you suddenly feel ill, start coughing or sneezing, please leave the church for the health and safety of others gathered.

Only one washroom will be available during this time to allow for proper cleaning during Mass. Please use the washroom only if absolutely necessary.

During this time of pandemic and under the guidance of local medical health officials, the faithful are asked to receive Holy Communion in the hand by placing one on top of the other, allowing the Eucharistic Minister to safely place the Body of Christ in one's hand without contact. Other instructions for Communion will be given during the Mass. Please note that at this time there will be **no opportunity for Confessions**.

Masks/face coverings should be removed prior to reception of Holy Communion and put back on after consumption.

Please note that at this time there will be **no opportunity for Confessions**.

The Holy Water fonts will remain empty. If you wish to take Holy Water home, please speak to the sacristan or Fr. Paul. You must provide their own container.

There will be no books or missalettes in the pews. There will be no singing until further notice. There will not be an entrance or recessional procession at this time in order to avoid close contact with numerous people. The Sign of Peace will be omitted.

If, within 14 days of attending Mass, you learn that you or someone in your family who attended Mass with you has tested positive for COVID-19, you are asked to: a) contact the Public Health Authority; and, b) contact the parish office. Your identity will not be revealed to anyone other than the Public Health Authority, and only to ensure that any spread is contained.

Following Mass, please depart the church so that cleaning may commence. While it is our nature to congregate/socialize in the foyer or parking lot, we ask you NOT to do so at this time. Please maintain physical distancing.

Thank-you for helping to keep everyone safe.