



June 1, 2020

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

I pray that you and your loved ones remain healthy and safe. We are preparing to begin in-person worship at our parishes, and I am looking forward to seeing all of you in the coming weeks, as you become comfortable with returning to public Mass. (Remember, Archbishop Thompson has continued the [dispensation](#) for Mass obligation to August 15.)

In this letter, I wish to explain some of the context for the changes you will see in the parish and the guidelines you will need to follow as you and your family return to church. We ask for your patience and understanding as we enter this phase of reopening our churches for public worship. By incorporating these basic guidelines, my hope is that our prayer and life together as a community of faith will be healthy, smart and holy.

I would like to highlight some of the important information now in place for our parish family related to our local plan for reopening churches and resuming public worship. Our local plan serves as an appendix to the plan set in place by Archbishop Thompson on May 8, 2020. The [Plan for Reopening of Churches and Resuming the Celebration of Public Sunday and Weekday Masses and the other Sacraments in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis](#) guides the process for each parish in the archdiocese for choosing a date and identifying a schedule, with their particular needs and pastoral realities in the forefront of the decision-making process.

Tuesday, June 2, was the day set for public prayer and worship to resume at St. Boniface Parish and St. Meinrad Parish, including daily Mass and weekly times set aside for Eucharistic Adoration and confession. In the coming days, our daily Mass schedule will be reviewed, taking into consideration the continued use of livestream by parishioners who use this resource to enhance their daily prayer life.

The weekend of June 6 and 7 is when our parish family will continue adopting our local plan for reopening of churches for public worship. Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, individuals who are at high risk for COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to attend remotely. When attending Mass in person, wear appropriate PPE and remain vigilant to hygiene: wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not available; soap and water should be used if the hands are visibly soiled; avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands; avoid close contact with people who are sick.

During this time, St. Boniface Parish and St. Meinrad Parish in Spencer County are under strict guidelines to protect our community's public health and safety. St. Boniface Parish and St. Meinrad Parish will adhere to all guidelines in place by the Indiana Governor, the CDC, and instructions for reopening churches in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Parishes may schedule Masses, sacramental celebrations, Funeral and Memorial Masses, including funeral visitations at their discretion, to ensure the safe capacity numbers within their local plan can be maintained. These may be done at an individual, invitation-only Mass, or in another way. Currently, bereavement luncheons are not possible due to the health and safety of the community.

The guidelines for St. Boniface Parish and St. Meinrad Parish integrate the requirements of the Catholic Church for the valid and licit celebration of Mass, in accord with Catholic teaching, liturgical law, and canon law.

At this time, when you are inside a church building, parish building or office space, please adhere to the following guidelines for the health and safety of our parish family, including the most vulnerable parishioners, parish staff, and the overall public health and safety of the local communities.

- The church will be cleaned and sanitized before and after each Mass by assigned individuals only. When cleaning and sanitizing PPE will be provided and must be worn.
- Hand sanitizer stations are available at all entrances of the church and must be used.
- All individuals over the age of 3 attending Mass are required to wear a face covering as defined by the CDC, except when receiving Holy Communion. Face covering must cover both the mouth and nose.
- All individuals are required to sit in seating that is clearly marked. There will be no seating in the front and back pews at this time to maintain social distance from foot traffic and for Emergency Medical Service (EMS) patient care work when necessary.
- Ushers will be assigned to direct seating, beginning at the front of the church. Individuals with mobility limitations are to be seated in the front pews to be safely ministered to with dignity and priority. Members of the same family or household are to sit in the same pew with those with mobility limitations to maximize the church's safe capacity.
- Always keep at least six feet of distance between yourself and others, including when in procession for Holy Communion and after individuals have received. Members of the same family or household are exempt.
- After those sitting in the front rows receive Holy Communion, individuals seated on the St. Joseph Altar side of the church will process single file, followed by the St. Mary Altar side.
- Immediately following the prayer after communion, individuals wishing to share the Blessed Sacrament with loved ones will be called forward to be commissioned and to receive an individual pyx, which is to be returned the following weekend in a container next to the offertory gift container at all entrances. Missalettes are located in the front pews; you are encouraged to take them so they can be used at home by parishioners joining the Mass by livestream or another media source.
- After Mass, there is to be no gathering inside the church building. Please exit the building and proceed to your vehicle. Before and after Mass, the sacristy and vestibule are not available for conversation.
- Liturgical ministers will follow guidelines in place for each ministry. Frequent updates will be made to the online ministry schedule, allowing liturgical ministers to volunteer according to when they feel comfortable serving.
- Worship aids and weekly bulletins are available online and will be mailed upon request.
- The Cry Room will be closed, and no Children's Liturgy of the Word is scheduled at this time.

Again, we ask for your patience and understanding as we enter this phase of reopening our churches for public worship. By incorporating these basic guidelines, my hope is that our prayer and life together as a community of faith will be healthy, smart and holy.

Last Sunday we celebrated Pentecost. We now return to the "Season of the Year" or "Ordinary Time," but the pattern does not fall completely into place. The first few Sundays are special solemnities of Our Lord,

so there will not be the green vestments and a numbered Sunday, but white vestments and the highest celebration. This Sunday is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, falling on what would be the 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

As we make the Sign of the Cross this weekend, keep in mind the Sign of the Cross and the Glory Be are two of the first prayers we learn that give glory to and mention the Blessed Trinity, recalling our baptism, since in the name of the Trinity we become children of God and members of the Church. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains:

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the “hierarchy of the truths of faith.” The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men “and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin” (CCC, 234).

We rejoice in Spirit and Truth as we live out our faith as one body, one spirit, in Christ.

Whether you plan to return to Mass this weekend or in the days to come, I encourage you to take time to nurture and grow your Catholic faith. Make time to use our resources to stay connected to your parish family. The church buildings remain open for private prayer and devotion, quiet time before the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, or to say a prayer and light a votive candle. Mass and other scheduled programs and activities remain available on our livestream by visiting the parish website. Select the button that says “Live” for the daily Mass or to view the directory of previously aired Masses offered throughout the month.



The screenshot shows the website for St. Meinrad Catholic Church. At the top, there is a navigation bar with social media icons (Twitter, Facebook, RSS, Email, Phone) and a search box. Below this, the website is split into two main sections: Historic St. Boniface Catholic Church (founded 1847) and St. Meinrad Catholic Church (founded 1861). A green navigation menu contains links for LIVE, NEWS, ABOUT, PRAYER AND SACRAMENTS, PARISH LIFE, RESOURCES, CELEBRATIONS, and YOUTH. The main content area features a large heading "Welcome! Upcoming Mass Livestream" and a social media share button showing 45 shares. On the right, there is a "Live" section with a prominent "Mass Livestream" button.

God bless you. You remain with me in prayer, I am

*Father Anthony Vinson, OSB*