

# Blessed Sacrament Community

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Pastor



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Dear Blessed Sacrament Parishioners,

This is truly a historic time, a time of distancing and isolation, a time when the world has seemingly stopped. We will be afforded the opportunity to gather together as a Christian community and break bread together. I am personally looking forward to that day with great anticipation. That day while an exciting day for us all will come with challenges. The challenges will be overcome if and only if we work together. While the details have yet to get fully worked out, the church has begun to work its way through the issues. Like any issue there are often multiple approaches to handle them and the church being run by humans is likely to make a mistake along the way. Any mistakes would not be intentional or with malice but done for the sole purpose of protecting the safety and health of our faithful parishioners. The most important thing is that we come together as a family of believers to share and strengthen each other through celebrating Mass.

Governor Baker has announced that the state will begin to loosen up restrictions. The restrictions will be lifted gradually. There will be four stages to the reopening. The differences in the stages will be determined by size of gatherings as well as physical distancing. The first stage would be a strict adherence to limiting the size of the gatherings and physical distancing. The last stage will not have limits on size of gatherings or physical distancing.

At the time, this was written the church was not expected to open during the first phase. It was thought that the church would likely be included in the second phase. In that phase, limits on the number of people in the actual church will likely be imposed. There will be strict adherence to physical distancing. As you are aware that did not happen, we opened immediately. The same protocols will apply it will be asked that unless you come as a family unit that you maintain a six-foot distancing protocol. To aid you in maintaining your distance the church will be marked off with tape. The collection baskets will not be passed around as they could potentially pass the virus, instead they will be placed at the entrances of the church. Communion will be distributed not at its usual time but rather at the end of the celebration to reduce the physical movement within the church.

## **Other noticeable changes that you will see:**

- No altar servers will be assisting at Mass.
- No choir as this virus is an air born contaminant and singing could spread the disease.
- No sign of peace, which was something we began immediately before the shut down.
- There will be hand sanitizers at the entrances of the church, and no holy water.

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## General Provisions:

- Dispense the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass during until further notice.
- Encourage those who are at higher risk from COVID-19 (i.e. those who are older or who have serious underlying medical health conditions) to stay home. As circumstances allow, a visit from a priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to bring them the Eucharist may be possible. (Guidance for bringing Holy Communion to a private home is forthcoming in a separate part of these guidelines. )
- Urge the faithful that anyone with a cough of any sort, and anyone feeling sick, should not come to the church for a visit or for any ceremonies.
- Hand Sanitizer will be placed near the entrances to the church to encourage parishioners to sanitize their hands upon entering and exiting the building.
- Regularly clean and disinfect commonly-touched surfaces in the church. (See Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations on cleaning public facilities.)
- In accordance with current public health recommendations, the faithful should wear cloth face coverings when in public, including when they come to church. Surgical masks or N-95 respirators are not recommended. (See CDC recommendations on face coverings.)
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. (See CDC recommendations on face coverings.)

Again I know how difficult this has been on everyone. I know that this may be a lot of information all at one time. I know that a mistake is likely to occur at some point. Yet I also know that we as humans can do amazing things when we work together. We can do amazing things we look out for one another. We can do amazing things when we recognize that we are all trying as best we can to get through this most difficult time. We can do amazing things when we love one another, because we are all brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

Since it is for the betterment of the whole we are limiting the number of people into the church at one time. The state number is 40% of our occupancy permit. Because of the design of our church and the size of many of the pews we would not be able to get to 40% number. **Seating in the church will be a first come first serve bases. Over flow can remain in the car and we will be broad casting the Mass on 90.9 FM for those who cannot get into church or for those who prefer to stay outside. Communion will be distributed after Mass in the parking lot.**

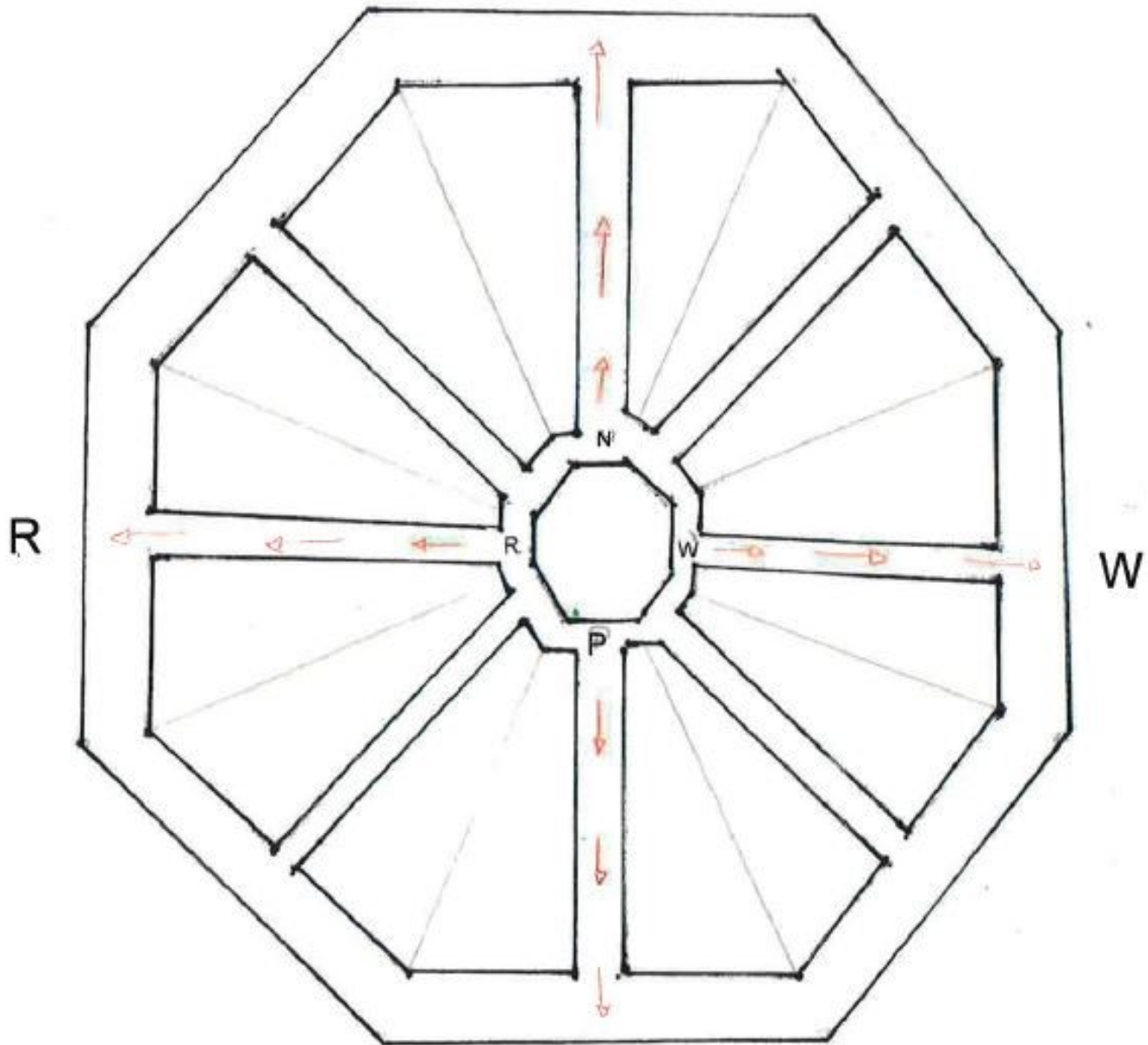
Thank you for your patience during this difficult time.

Yours in Christ



Rev. Robert A. Gentile, Jr.

Northampton Street



Parking Lot

Communion will be at end of Mass to prevent unnecessary movement.

Please use the main isle for exiting the church after receiving communion.

Side isle are to used to enter into the inner circle, near the altar. Then proceed to communion station closest to you. Communion Stations are at usual place.