

## Saint Augustin Parish

### Phase I

As we watch the news both nationally and locally, we can see that we are gradually and carefully taking steps as a nation to resume some of our normal business and social activity.

In our Des Moines diocese, there are some rural counties that have been permitted to start having daily Mass for more than 10 people, as long as certain precautions and guidelines are followed. These guidelines have been established at the Diocese level and are more or less consistent with what is happening around the country.

Roughly defined, the phases of reopening are defined as:

- Phase I – weekday Mass only, with spacing and other considerations
- Phase II – weekday and weekend Mass, with spacing, but without social gathering
- Phase III – weekday Mass, weekend Mass, and social gathering (close to normal)

As of today, we are still waiting for a date from the Diocese for when we will be permitted to move to Phase I here in the metropolitan area, which consists of Polk County, Dallas County, and some others in our area. At this point, Phase I is likely going to occur in the mid-June time frame. What we would like to describe here is what you can expect to see once we resume having Mass here at Saint Augustin.

### Phase I Operating Mode:

- When you arrive, you will see volunteers/ushers posted at every entrance to the church, and inside the church. They will be present to ensure that we are spacing ourselves properly as we enter the church, leave the church, and when we process to communion and back to our pews.
- We have eliminated access to every other pew in both the church and the chapel. This will significantly impact our capacity. Families will be allowed to stay together without spacing.
- We should fill the front pews first. Please move as close to the center of your pew, so that people will not need to move past you in the pew with little or no separation.
- People in the older age demographic and people with pre-existing health conditions are still encouraged to stay at home and watch Mass live streamed. A digital camera system is being installed this week which will enable us to stream Mass live to our community from our website and social media platforms.
- The entire church will be sanitized after each Mass.
- There will be no holy water in the fonts. Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrances. Please use handkerchiefs or tissues for coughing or sneezing.
- Everyone in attendance **MUST** be wearing a mask. Please plan to bring a mask for everyone in your family.
- We will have no interpersonal contact during the Sign of Peace. A simple wave, smile, and nod will have to suffice for now.
- We will not be passing around the collection baskets. A secure container with a slot will be placed at every entrance to collect tithing envelopes and cash contributions.

- There will be no presentation of the gifts.
- All Missalettes have been removed from the pews. We will have well known songs being sung by our song leaders from the choir loft. Those attending Mass will be encouraged not to sing, as the act of singing may increase the risk of transmission.
- The weekly parish bulletin will not be available in the back of church. It will always be available on our parish website.
- Holy Communion will be available to the faithful at large. The rules surrounding the reception of the blessed sacrament include:
  - We will be receiving communion in the first species only; the precious body of Christ. We will not be distributing the blood of Christ.
  - We will be receiving the host on your hand, and not on the tongue, in order to reduce the risk of virus transmission.
  - You are encouraged to temporarily move your mask and consume the host after reception of the blessed sacrament on your hand, after you have moved away from the priest or communion minister.

These guidelines may be modified somewhat between now and when we are ready to resume Mass. We will keep you informed as soon as we know more about a date for us moving to Phase I. We are all excited and impatient for the day when we can once again fully participate in the liturgy of the Mass.

We will also keep these guidelines available on the parish website.

Sincerely,

Father Vince Rosonke