



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Catholic Church & School

May 24, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

The day after I submitted last week's article for the bulletin, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court delivered its ruling against Governor Evers' "Safer at Home" protocols. The day after that, Archbishop ListECKI issued a document entitled "The Catholic Comeback Matrix," which outlines parameters for a broad range of Church and parish activities, including the celebration of Sunday Mass. Rather than try to summarize the nine-page chart for you, I would encourage you to look at it for yourselves. You can access the Matrix at this link:

https://www.archmil.org/ArchMil/attachments/CatholicComebackMatrix_Parish.pdf

Since this site does not include the cover letter which the Archbishop sent out with the Matrix on May 14th. I'd like to offer a relevant portion of that letter here:

We remain in the "Safer at Home" phase until, Tuesday, May 26, when we will move into Phase 1. Sunday Mass will resume with Masses on Sunday, May 31 (including Masses of Anticipation on the evening of May 30).

I know people are anxious to return to normal. However, we must also acknowledge that people are anxious about returning to public activities and crowded spaces. Following the matrix is a prudent approach and a reasonable and responsible way to resume Catholic life in our archdiocese without taking unnecessary risks. The safety and well-being of our people is a top priority.

Please note that Phase 1 restricts participation in those events that are permitted to 10 people. The only activity in which this restriction does not apply is Sunday Masses. Such will be the practice until Phase 2 is reached, when the maximum number of participants will be raised to 50 while still practicing social distancing. I would guess that, barring a sudden significant spike in reported cases of CoVID-19 infections, we might see Phase 2 announced before mid-Summer.

Phase 3, with the lifting of all restrictions, may be a while in coming. So, it looks like at least for the next several months, social distancing will be the norm applicable to all church and parish functions, especially our celebration of the Mass. No doubt, it will take a while for all of us to get accustomed to this new normal, particularly as we watch people outside of Church behaving in ways anywhere on the spectrum from super-cautious to hyper-careless.

As I mentioned last week, if you come to Church for the Feast of Pentecost next weekend, be flexible and follow the ushers' instructions (Give 'em a break! It's new to them, too!). Please be courteous, be patient, and allow the gifts of the Holy Spirit to fill your imagination and your heart.

Fr. Philip D. Reifenberg, Pastor