



# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

## Catholic Church & School

May 31, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

Happy Birthday, Church!!! It's Pentecost, and the spirit is a-movin'! At both STA and SJB delayed First Communion celebrations are being planned. A graduation ceremony for SJB Eighth Graders in early August is in the process of coming together. Road America is hosting its first public race of the season this weekend, and the brand sparkling-new SJB Concession Stand is [maybe] ready for business. And The Catholic Comeback goes into full swing at parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Milwaukee this weekend.

The pushback to "re-opening" America has been something to see – from lynching effigies of Kentucky's governor to priests telling the bishops of Minnesota to slow down! The pictures of people shoulder-to-shoulder on beaches and in water parks side by side with shots of deserted highways and empty airports. The visuals stand in just as stark a contrast as do opinions about any topic related to CoVID-19. When 2020 came through the door five months ago, who would've thought we'd be where we are today?

My guess is that historians and maybe even more so sociologists will have a field day trying to make sense of all this somewhere down the line. Archbishop Weakland once said that it takes fifty years before the true meaning of an ecumenical council can be discerned; perhaps the same can be said about intuiting the significance of world-wide events like this pandemic. I certainly hope, though, that it doesn't take fifty years for people to learn from our behavior and to act with greater consciousness and consideration of those around us.

Here at home, at STA and SJB we are taking different tacks as we approach Pentecost and weekend Masses down the line. Both parishes will stress social distancing at Mass as well as during entry and departure from Church. At SJB we are asking parishioners to sign-up for the Mass they wish to attend, while still trying to retain some capacity to accommodate "walk-ins"; STA is not going the route of pre-registration – at least, not initially. At either Church, if it appears that the number of people present is making it impossible to maintain safe social distancing, we will have no alternative but to turn additional people away. Gently and respectfully, we may have to turn people away. Safety must be a top concern.

As I've said before, if you plan to join us at either STA or SJB, please be flexible and follow the ushers' instructions (Give 'em a break! It's new to them, too!). Be courteous to one another; be patient with one another. Of course, we will be evaluating what works and what doesn't. And please believe that I sincerely do hope to see you in Church many times over the weeks and months ahead.

Fr. Philip D. Reifenberg, Pastor