



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

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March 13, 2020

Dear St. Francis Parish Community:

I am writing to you to outline the parish's response to the coronavirus situation in light of Governor Brown's announcement to suspend large gatherings in excess of 250 people. Obviously, this creates a difficult situation for us since most of our weekend Masses have more than 250 people in attendance.

As a faith community, we must support this effort for the common good in order to slow the spread of this virus and to protect especially our elderly and the vulnerable. At the same time, we want to make sure that the spiritual benefits of the Eucharist and other sacraments are available for as long as we can.

We are making the following changes to our Sunday Mass schedule and cancelling the events noted below. There is no change to the daily Mass schedule.

### **New Sunday Mass Schedule**

Beginning the weekend of March 21-22, we will increase the number of Masses. The purpose of this increase is so that we can reduce the number of people attending each Mass, hopefully keeping attendance below 250.

The new Mass schedule is as follows:

- Saturday: 4:30 p.m. Historic Church
- Saturday: 5:00 p.m. 27<sup>th</sup> Street Church
- Sunday: 7:30 a.m. 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 27<sup>th</sup> Street Church
- Sunday: 9 a.m. 4:30 p.m. Historic Church

The Offertory collection will be revised. Be prepared to either make your donation as you enter the church or to go up to the sanctuary at the Offertory to place your gift in one of the baskets there. IDEA: This could be a good time to set up online giving. Contact Jane Rude at the parish office to learn how.

We are not in a position to offer a second Spanish Mass. We ask those members of our Hispanic community who are more bilingual to attend one of the other Masses so that attendance at 12:30 p.m. Mass is reduced.

NOTE: If you are sick with a cough, a fever or trouble breathing, stay home and seek medical attention. If you are a person at risk (age 60+, have respiratory disease such as emphysema, asthma, or a compromised immune system), consider staying at home until the general situation improves. Go to the Oregon Health Authority website to get more information ([www.oregon.gov/oha](http://www.oregon.gov/oha)). You can also call 211 with questions.

**Bishop Cary has asked us to communicate the following information to our people.**

- “Those whose health is fragile, those who are 60 and older, and those who feel the need to take precaution are dispensed from their Sunday Mass obligation until the crisis passes. They should be in peace with their decision to stay home on Sunday.
- Those who have cold and flu-like symptoms should avoid public gatherings and are asked to please stay home. They too are dispensed from attending Sunday Mass until the crisis passes.
- Those who will not be attending Mass are encouraged to celebrate in solidarity with their parish community by gathering as a household to read the Scriptures of the Sunday Liturgy, to pray the rosary together, and to make an act of spiritual communion.
- As the situation continues to develop, please see the Diocese of Baker website ([dioceseofbaker.org](http://dioceseofbaker.org)) for updates.”

**Prayer of Spiritual Communion**

*My Jesus,*

*I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.*

*I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.*

*Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,*

*come at least spiritually into my heart.*

*I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.*

*Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.*

### **Liturgical Minister Schedules**

We will be re-working the liturgical minister assignments to fit the new schedule. If you are a minister, you will be hearing from the Office of Liturgy next week. No doubt, we will be reducing the number of ministers needed at each Mass so that hopefully we can cover all the additional Masses.

### **Ways to Stay in Touch**

- All the liturgies at St. Francis will be streamed live. Please go to our parish website [www.stfrancisbend.org](http://www.stfrancisbend.org) and click on “Live at St. Francis”. **(We hope to get it up and running soon.)**
- Download the weekly Lenten reflection sheets that we distribute each week. You can find them on the parish website: [stfrancisbend.org](http://stfrancisbend.org).

### **Lenten Confessions**

The Parish Lenten Confession night will be rescheduled and we will announce our plans later. In the meantime, Confessions are heard after the 7 a.m. Mass on Tuesdays (27<sup>th</sup> Street Church) and on Saturday afternoons at 3 p.m. (27<sup>th</sup> Street Church). Due to the confined confession space at the Historic Church, we are suspending Confessions there after the 8 a.m. Saturday Mass.

### **School & Religious Education Closure**

In response to Governor Brown’s order today, our school will be closed March 16th – 31st. Religious Education on Wednesdays and Sundays K-12 are also cancelled.

### **All Other Parish Services & Activities Are Cancelled**

All other parish devotional services such as Stations of the Cross and the Mission and all other meetings such as Parish & Finance Council meetings, Bible studies, RCIA, Returning Catholics, Grief Ministry, Knights of Columbus breakfasts, Young at Heart activities are cancelled through March 31.

Daily Mass and Adoration will continue as scheduled.

### **New Ministry**

We are examining the possibility of starting a new ministry which could bring food and necessities to people who are in isolation at home and who are alone with no one to help. Please stay tuned for more information. If you are interested in helping with this ministry, please contact Teresa Mikkelson at the parish office: [officecoordinator@stfrancisbend.org](mailto:officecoordinator@stfrancisbend.org)

**Be Flexible**

This situation is fluid so these may change. We will do our best to respond and communicate quickly. Be sure to review my February 28 column in the parish bulletin *Keeping Our Community Healthy* for the changes we have made at Mass and all that we are doing to keep the community healthy.

**Prayer Support**

We also turn to our heavenly Father at this time and we want to make sure that all of us are praying for those affected by the illness, those who care for them, those who have died, those working to establish effective policies and procedures, and those who are searching for a cure or vaccine. Pope Francis has entrusted Rome and all Italy to the Blessed Virgin Mary's help and protection. Let us lift up our nation and entrust it to the protection of our heavenly Mother.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Jose". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Jose Mudakodiyil  
Pastor