

PASTOR'S CORNER

Weekend Opening

When permission was granted to open churches back up following two months of lockdown, the conventional wisdom had it that all parishes would have waiting lists for all offered Masses most especially since the Governor set the opening limit at only 25 persons. It was for this reason that we took our time training the various ministers and setting up the facility for social distancing and safe interaction among parishioners. We also chose to open up during the weekdays first since we figured that overall demand would be less than on the weekends and therefore easier to manage (although we still anticipated excess demand for each Mass). We would only add in weekend Masses when we were comfortable that we could handle the waiting line of parishioners and when the Governor upped the limit to 50 or more. Letters were sent out inviting all of our parishioners to sign up for the daily Mass of their choice. We were braced for action. Almost nothing happened!

As it turns out, we were wrong on several counts. First, demand was stunningly and catastrophically low; even below the usual low attendance levels of pre-pandemic daily Masses!! To date we have averaged around only 10-12 people (including myself and 3-4 ministers) per weekday Mass. During a pandemic, this level is simply too low to justify the inherent risk of putting on a Mass, while also asking the same people, again and again, to be the ministers. For this reason, it was decided that all daily Masses would be canceled until the beginning of the school year at which time the school classes alone (on a class by class basis) would be invited to attend on select dates. *Accordingly, this week (beginning June 7) will be the last one during which daily Masses will be offered.* To be sure, in the absence of a pandemic low Mass attendance would not cause any cancellation. However, when risk is associated with the offering of any Mass and almost all of the ministers and most of the attendees are in the higher risk groups, it would be irresponsible to continue with Masses under these conditions.

The good news is that since the ending of weekday Masses will coincide with the opening back up of the weekend Mass schedule (*Saturday Vigil 5:00 pm; Sunday Masses at 9:00 am and 11:30 am*), St. Therese will not be without some options for parishioners to attend the Holy Eucharist. **We will begin weekend Masses on the weekend of June 20 and 21.** This will continue until further notice.

As is the case now, however, you must sign-up through the parish office in order to attend any of these Masses. As such, if you are interested please call Angie at the front office at **503-256-5850** and have her sign you up on the desired date. Angie is available Monday through Friday from 9:15 am to 1:00 pm via phone only, but you can leave a message with your name and requested Mass time at any time. Angie will call you back to let you know if there is available space on the date requested. Please do not show up for Mass unless you have received a confirmation of space availability.

Upon the posting of this notification on the website, please feel free to call!

Fr. Steve

