

Regarding the Re-opening of the Church for Mass and the Sacraments at St Louis de Montfort Catholic Church

Many of you may have heard in the news or on the grapevine that Archbishop José has said that Churches may start to reopen on Trinity Sunday. **This is great news...but difficult news.** It has placed the onus on when to reopen on the shoulders of the Pastors and has imposed many, literally pages worth, of social distancing protocols that have to be place and many restrictions. Formal plans and proposals have to be drawn up for approval by our Regional Bishop before we can actually open up. This is a huge task for us here at St Louis de Montfort and the other Deanery One local parishes. The pastors of Deanery One had a clear discussion on this with Bishop Robert and have agreed that what is being asked of us will take a considerable amount of time to get in place. We have thus agreed that we would like, subject to approval of our plans, to **open up for Masses on Corpus Christi, June 14th.**

I can almost hear the whoops of joy but also the sharp intake of breath for those who might think we should open on Trinity Sunday. Our consistent position throughout this pandemic has been that we open up when it safe and prudent to do so and when we can do so in line with guidelines from the Archdiocese and County Health Authorities. Remember that the virus is still out there and has, as I type, now killed over 100,000 people in USA alone and will kill many more.

Three very difficult points about opening up amongst many.

- 1 We are restricted to only 100 people in the church for Mass at any one time.
(St Anthony's in Los Alamos probably about 40. San Ramon, Sisquoc will not reopen under these restrictions.)

No matter how we do this, we are all going to be disappointed we can't get into the church.

- 2 We have to clean down the pews and church after every Mass!

- 3 We will need 100s of volunteers to do this, usher, cleaners, door greeters and flow regulators etc- and here's a kicker - they have to be under 65 years of age. Anyone older, which is much of our volunteer force in the parish, is considered to be in the vulnerable group.

So these two weeks we will be working very hard to get this all in place as best we can. But reopening does not mean operating as we used to do so, probably for many months.

We also have to look at provision for Confessions and how we start to pick up other sacraments that have been postponed or cancelled.

The opening up is also in three phases.

Firstly, there will be opening up for moments of private prayer

(Only 10 in the church at one time). This also has to be highly regulated and cleaned etc!

Secondly, Weekday Masses might start before the Sunday Masses; again highly regulated.

Thirdly, subject to approval the Churches will open under great restrictions for Sunday Masses

Please remember however

Livestreaming will continue

The obligation to attend Sunday Mass is still on hold.

If you still feel vulnerable of course you should not come to church.

Please take all of this on board and pray about it, then,

Be prepared to play your part.

Offer to help.

Please do not allow yourself to become “hot under the collar” about waiting a bit longer. We

have to have the understanding of this as a pro-life matter ...

your life ... and the lives of each other.

This pernicious virus is unseen and can be lull us into a false sense of security about it but it is out there... killing people and harming countless other peoples' lives. The death toll is horrific

but many who have had CoVid19 are seriously debilitated by it for weeks and months.

So we wait a little bit longer

A correspondent, who connects with us at SLdM via livestream,

made a very good observation which I will share with you.

Catholic Christians know about waiting. It is part of our Faith and celebrative life.

On the grand scale we are all waiting to go to our true home in heaven.

In Advent there is the waiting before the arrival of Emmanuel, the God who walks with us.

In Lent we prepare and wait for the Resurrection of Christ that brings us redemption.

At this very moment we are waiting, somewhat fearfully with the Apostles,

for the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit to be fulfilled.

The only way we can get through the waiting is if there is an end point that makes it worth it.

This next little bit of waiting will be worth it so that we can return and receive

the Corpus et Sanguinis Christi, The Body and Blood of Christ on that blessed Sunday.

This is the first of several communications I will give over the coming days.

Please listen to notices at Livestream Masses and follow this site for regular updates and explanations of what to expect when we do open up.

Can I ask that you do not keep phoning and asking details but tune in we can't get on and get things ready if we are constantly repeating what is already being communicated. Thanks.

Next week, we will put out a mail shot to you all with full details of what to expect etc.

God bless you all, and the parish team which is working very hard to get this right for you.

Fr Aidan-Peter CJ