

**Subject: Reopening Plan for Saint Petronille Church amid COVID-19**

Dear Parishioners of Saint Petronille,

I pray that you and your loved ones are healthy. As you may have seen, Bishop Richard Pates, recently shared our multi-phased plan for reopening churches in the Diocese of Joliet. Specifically,

- Phase I allows for parishes to reopen for Baptism, Reconciliation, Weddings and Funerals with a limit of TEN attendees.
- Phase IA allows for parishes to reopen for private prayer and adoration with a limit of TEN attendees. (We have safely begun this process.)
- Phase II allows for reopening for weekday and weekend Masses for larger groups depending on the guidelines which will be issued by the State of Illinois at a later date, and the capacity of the church building

**Our Saint Petronille Reopening Plan**

First and foremost, it is important for everyone to understand that our efforts will prioritize the safety and wellbeing of all while maintaining due respect and reverence for the sacraments and liturgical norms of our faith.

I have assembled a Parish Reopening Leadership Team with parishioner co-captains to lead our efforts. Together, we will participate in required training from the Diocese to ensure that our parish reopening plan conforms to the guidelines developed by the Diocese in collaboration with civil and healthcare authorities. We will also obtain protective and cleaning supplies, as well as guidance on purchasing/maintaining supplies ongoing.

**Volunteers Needed**

We will need volunteers to assist with various aspects of our parish reopening plan. Importantly, leadership team members and volunteers must not be part of a “vulnerable population” no underlying medical condition such as diabetes; lung disease; undergoing cancer treatment, etc.) Those over the age of 60 should consult with the Parish Leadership Team about possibly serving as a volunteer. I ask all of you who are younger than 60 and healthy with no underlying health conditions to consider assisting with one of three reopening teams. I especially encourage high school, college students as well as young adults serve and volunteer for teams.

- Set-up team. Sample duties include ensuring that all supplies needed for each sacramental celebration/gathering are ready for use, entrances and exits are marked and propped physically open prior to attendees’ arrival/departure, windows are opened, etc.
- Greeting team. Sample duties include assisting in managing the flow of congregants as they enter the church, making sure attendees use hand sanitizer upon entering, are wearing a mask, and are reminded not to enter if ill; directing people to appropriate seating/waiting areas, etc.
- Cleaning team. Sample duties include maintaining and cleaning essential and trafficked areas of the church before and after the church has been used. Masks and gloves will

be provided, if you do not have your own, in addition to approved cleaning/disinfecting supplies.

The Reopening Leadership Team and I will make sure that all volunteers are properly trained. Please send us a message at [reopen@stpetchurch.org](mailto:reopen@stpetchurch.org) to indicate your willingness and ability to volunteer.

### **Timing for Our Reopening**

As I mentioned, the Parish Reopening Leadership Team members are in the process of completing training. Once all members have completed the training, we will need to review and complete tasks assigned to all parishes as part of a reopening certification process to be approved by the Diocese. Our parish, like all others in the Diocese, will move forward at a pace and timing appropriate for our situation.

Because we must limit the number of attendees to minimize the risk of the spread of disease, and in order to avoid “turning people away” at our doors, we are devising a system by which will safely and equitably allow as many parishioners as possible to attend Mass. More information will follow. We ask you to be patient as we establish this new system, and further ask that you be understanding as we try to make the Mass available to all who wish to attend under these limitations.

The guidelines and measures required to reopen are designed to protect our wellbeing and that of our broader community. It is good to note that we do this together as from the first pages of Scripture we learn that we indeed are “our brother’s keeper.” Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed, “that they all may be one” (Jn 17:21) and commanded us “love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (Jn 13:34). Our collective patience, willingness to help and the care we take to reopen is a demonstration of our unity and love for one another.

May God grant you His peace during this difficult time and may He manifest His love and presence to you in abundant ways. If you have any questions, please contact me at 630-469-0404 or [frmilota@outlook.com](mailto:frmilota@outlook.com).

Prayers.

In Christ,

Fr. Thomas Milota