



Diocese of Joliet Phased Re-opening of Our Churches

Subject: Reopening Plan for Holy Trinity Catholic Parish amid COVID-19

Dear Parish Family,

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
- Phase IA allows for parishes to reopen for private prayer and adoration
- Phase II allows for reopening for weekday and weekend Masses for larger groups in line with the guidelines issued by the State of Illinois, and the capacity of the church building

Our Holy Trinity 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 have participated 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 already have had a great response of 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”- that is, they should not be over the age of 60 nor have any 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 htparish@comcast.net to indicate your willingness and ability to volunteer. From those that step forward, we will also request that some act as volunteer captains to help lead each of the three teams.

Timing for Our Reopening

Already at Holy Trinity, we have already submitted the necessary paperwork to the Diocese of Joliet for reopening certification in order to begin the celebration of previously scheduled sacraments (namely, weddings) as early as Friday, June 5. As of May 28, a new guidance from the State of Illinois was issued for reopening places of worship for public services with up to 25% capacity of the church building. This is very exciting news and will allow us to open public Masses to up to 100 attendees when we are ready to safely do so. **For now, Holy Trinity Catholic Parish is tentatively planning to resume public Masses under these current provisions for the weekend of June 13 and 14 - the Solemnity of Corpus Christi.**

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 have established an online registration system through Sign Up Genius (www.signupgenius.com.) We are encouraging parishioners to visit our Parish Reopening Resources webpage (https://www.holytrinitywestmont.org/events/parish_calendar/parish-reopening-resources) to access the linked Sign Up Genius sheets for weekend Masses so that we can regulate how many attendees to expect at Mass and avoid overcrowding. Sign Up Genius sheets will be created for all public Masses, sacraments and confessions. For those without access to the internet, or who may have difficulty signing up themselves, please call the Parish Office at (630) 968-1366 to request assistance from Parish Staff to get signed up.

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. **At a minimum, please limit your sign up to one weekend Mass every three to four weeks and one confession every four weeks.** Initially, please recognize that many people will want to participate in Masses and confessions. Be charitable when recognizing that reality, and allow others to avail themselves of the Sacraments before returning yourself.



We also will continue to recommend - in alignment with the Diocese of Joliet and health officials - that those individuals who are considered "vulnerable" (again: over the age of 60 and/or underlying medical condition such as diabetes; lung disease; undergoing cancer treatment, etc.) should continue to stay at home until more information is obtained about the safety of that population going out into public spaces, such as our church. The dispensation from Sunday Masses will remain in effect for all Catholics in the Diocese of Joliet, even during the resumption of these public Masses.

Finally, please read the following regulations that will be in effect for all services:

- 1. If you are sick or came into contact with someone who is sick, please stay home.**
2. All, without exception, must wear face masks at all services. We ask that you bring your own facemask from home when coming to Holy Trinity.
3. Social distancing must be observed – 6ft between unrelated individuals (families, other parties that live together may be seated together.) Volunteer crews will be available to escort individuals and families to their pews
4. Hand Sanitizing should be done before and after each service. Volunteer crews will be available for this purpose. Please bring your own personal hand sanitizer with you.

Please stay tuned to our parish Website (www.holytrinitywestmont.org), our social media pages (Facebook and Instagram), our weekly bulletin (found online or mailed upon request) and our parish Flocknote email system (<https://www.holytrinitywestmont.org/about-us/contact-us/subscribe>) for more updates and protocols. You will be able to access all of the necessary resources for this process on our website at: https://www.holytrinitywestmont.org/events/parish_calendar/parish-reopening-resources.

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 us at [hparish@comcast.net](mailto:htparish@comcast.net) or (630) 968-1366.

Yours in the Risen Christ,
Rev. Rafal Wasilewski, C.R.

Pastor