

# **“Returning To Worship Together”**

## *St. Clare set to open on May 23*

Bishop Louis Kihneman, III, Bishop of the Diocese of Biloxi, has given the churches the “green light” to start public Masses on May 23rd, *without obligation*, but complying with the requirements of social distancing, so that we can come together and celebrate God’s gift of Himself in Holy Communion. In order to facilitate opening here at St. Clare, the following have/will be done to comply with the guidelines set forth by the Bishop.

- Those who are illness-free may return to Mass on Sundays and/or weekdays, *without obligation*, in numbers that can be suitably arranged in the church while allowing for the 6 feet of physical distance between individuals or family groups who live in the same household. All the pews at St. Clare have been measured and taped to accommodate this requirement, as well as evenly spaced chairs being set up in the Parish Center with sound to hear the Mass.
- Masks will be worn by all those in the capacity of being ushers, the priest, the deacon, altar servers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Hand sanitizer will be available on the altar.
- All parishioners are encouraged to wear a mask for self-protection and protection of others who are in attendance.
- The Book of the Gospels will be placed on the altar ahead of the Mass.
- Chairs in the sanctuary have been rearranged to meet the required social distancing.
- Hand washing signs have been placed in both bathrooms.
- The offertory will be “touch-less” except for the ushers who will be using collection baskets with handles rather than using circular collection baskets that are passed from one person to another. The collection baskets will be sanitized before and after each collection.
- Exchanging the Sign of Peace will be done without physical contact, by waving or saying something to those sitting close to you.
- Prior to distribution of Holy Communion, the priest and other ministers will use hand sanitizer. Communion will be accomplished in single file, with the parishioners following the marked off areas to keep the required social distancing.
- Pews that allow for parishioners to be seated have been marked with blue painter’s tape. Those pews that must remain unoccupied are marked with yellow painter’s tape. The floors have been marked as well for those coming up to receive communion that allow for required social distancing.
- Communion will be done under one species, the Body of Christ. Reception of the Precious Blood will be suspended for the time being, unless the individual is allergic to the ingredients of the host. In instances like this, a special chalice with wine will be set aside for consecration for that person. It means whoever is allergic to the ingredients of

the host should contact Fr. Jacob-Matthew or Deacon Mike Saxer to give us a heads up on what Mass you will attend.

- Communion will be distributed on the hand. The Minister of Holy Communion will use hand sanitizer before distributing communion, and will be wearing a mask while distributing communion.
- For those who bring their children to Mass, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under the age of 2 should not wear masks or face coverings.
- Parishioners here at St. Clare are asked to keep appropriate physical distance between them as they leave the church and return to their cars.
- We have been blessed thus far in not having any of our parishioners contract the virus, but if someone does or tests positive for the virus, they should have 14 days without symptoms or 2 negative tests before they attempt to return to church services.
- Bottles of sanitizer are placed inside the main church doors, inside the Parish Center doors, in the bathrooms, and at the front door, on the altar, and at the steps leading up to the altar for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. After each Mass, the pews and collection baskets will be also sanitized as well.
- All of our plans have been cleared by both the Mayor of Waveland and the City Clerk to ensure that we are in compliance of what the State and the Bishop have asked us to do.
- Only with successful implementation of Phase I will St. Clare be cleared to proceed to Phase 2 and 3. These steps will not address every situation we may encounter here at St. Clare as parishioners return to Church. Common sense practices are allowed for, according to the principal of subsidiarity.