

Please share with Family and Friends

*I have no doubt that one of the most difficult sacrifices for us during this time of pandemic has been our inability to gather and the suspension of most sacramental celebrations, especially the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. As much as you hunger for the Body of Christ and the other Sacraments; those of us who are pastors have yearned for the presence of Christ found in you, the gathering of God's holy people. To that end, I am happy to report that we have just received direction from Cardinal Tobin that advises pastors as to the process for the gradual opening of our Churches and the resuming of our communal life of faith. The reopening will happen carefully and in **THREE** phases. While we are eager to reopen and invite you to return, the process must be executed in a safe and prudent way for the protection of all. The directives from Cardinal Tobin are expected to be followed without exception. I share them in the spirit of obedience to him, my superior, and with anticipated cooperation and understanding from you, our dear parishioners. I know that this has not been an easy time for any of our people because I know that it has not been an easy time for me. In these times of challenge let us continue to build on the good and creative practices that we have initiated, while at the same time, caring for and protecting one another in Christian charity.*

***PHASE ONE: #1.** The specific date for the commencement of Phase One is May 17, 2020. Consideration will be given to the policies of state and local authorities. **#2.** Cardinal Tobin continues to dispense the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday as well as from "Easter duty" (the obligation to receive Holy Communion during the season of Easter). **#3.** Churches may be opened solely for personal prayer during limited and designated hours. Individuals and families may enter the church for quiet prayer only. During opening hours, please exercise social distancing and sanitizing. No gatherings are permitted. Starting May 17, 2020, St. Lawrence Church will be open for private prayer from 8am to 12:30pm with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. This will occur every Sunday thereafter until the commencement of Phase Three. In accord with national, state and local health directives, those who show symptoms of COVID-19 or who have been exposed to an infected person are not permitted to enter the church for 14 days. **#4.** Holy water fonts must remain empty until further notice. **#5.** Public celebrations of liturgies, devotions, or other group prayer are not permitted at this time for any reason. **#6.** Masks must be worn by all individuals while in the church. **#7.** Individuals and families must maintain social

distancing (six feet) between each person while in the church. * **PHASE TWO:** While the specific date for the commencement of Phase Two has not yet been announced, it will include the directives for the celebration of public Masses on weekdays as well as funerals, with particular restrictions. ***PHASE THREE:** While the specific date for the commencement of Phase Three has not yet been announced, it will include the directives for the celebration of public Masses on Sundays, as well as Baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, Weddings, and RCIA ceremonies, each with their own particular restrictions. As we receive the clear directives, we will immediately share them with you. Again, many thanks for your patience and your prayers in these challenging days. Be sure to let us know if you have any particular concerns.

Blessings,

~Fr. Eric