



# CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF FALMOUTH

St. Anthony + St. Elizabeth Seton + St. Patrick

May 21, 2020

Dear parishioners of St. Anthony, St. Elizabeth Seton and St. Patrick Parishes,

We are excited to share with you our plan for the reopening of the churches of the Catholic Community of Falmouth. Bishop Da Cunha has announced that **all parishes in the diocese are to open on the weekend of May 30/31, the Solemnity of Pentecost**. The plan has been formed based on the policies and guidelines of federal, state and diocesan authorities and with input from other pastors, our deacons, staff and some parishioners. Thanks for your help.

Our objective is to gather as a community to celebrate Holy Mass, the other sacraments and rituals of the Church reverently and safely. We ask for your cooperation, patience and understanding during these unprecedented times. It is just great that we are back!

Msgr. Stephen J. Avila, Pastor

Rev. Ryan J. Healy, Parochial Vicar

## PASTORAL PLAN FOR REOPENING THE CHURCHES OF THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF FALMOUTH COLLABORATIVE

### Part I: Celebration of Masses

- **Public Masses will begin on the weekend of May 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup>, the Solemnity of Pentecost.**
- **Weekend Mass schedule**
  - St. Anthony, St. Elizabeth Seton and St. Patrick will return to their regular schedule of Masses.
  - St. Thomas Chapel and St. Joseph Chapel will remain closed at this time.
- **Weekday Mass schedule**
  - St. Anthony: Monday-Friday 8am (to accommodate those who will continue to attend Mass via live-stream)
  - St. Elizabeth: Tues., Wed. Thurs 9am
  - St. Patrick: No weekday Masses, Saturday morning Mass at 8am.
- **Mass will continue to be live-streamed from St. Anthony's Church**
- **The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, issued by Bishop da Cunha, remains in effect until further notice.** Those who are most vulnerable and at a greater risk (due to age, preexisting health conditions, or in close proximity to vulnerable people) are encouraged to remain home at this time. If a person shows any symptoms of illness, please do not come to church.
- **Per state regulations, gatherings cannot exceed 40% of its occupancy and take into account social distancing of 6 feet between people (or households.)** This means only approximately 3 people in every other pew, with a total occupancy per church of approximately 140-150 people.

- **The door in which you enter will determine where you sit in church. A special team of ushers will assist you in finding a seat.** For safety and order, a person will not be able to choose a specific seat.
- **Once we reach our occupancy limit, we will not be able to admit others.** Charity, cooperation and understanding are asked of all.
- **Everyone entering the church will be required to wear a mask or other face covering.** Please provide your own masks.
- **While there will be hand sanitizer available,** please consider providing your own, if you can, as supply is limited.
- **There will be receptacles at the doors of the church in which you may place your contribution to the parish as you enter.** You may place both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> collections together. On-line giving is encouraged. (Contact the collaborative office for assistance.) Thank you so much for your support, especially at this time.
- **The offertory procession** (bringing up of the bread and wine) is eliminated.
- **The sign of peace** will continue to be eliminated as well as other forms of prayer where participants hold hands (Our Father)
- **The holy water fonts** at the doors of the church will remain empty.
- **Missals/ hymnals have been removed** as it will be difficult to sanitize them.
- **Choirs will not sit together and sing**
- **Holy Communion will be distributed at the conclusion of the Mass. Those receiving communion will approach row by row (keeping 6 feet safe distancing protocol) and section by section and then immediately, reverently and quietly, leave the church by the door in which they entered.** The priest/deacon/Eucharistic minister distributing the hosts will wear a mask. Communicants may remove their mask just prior to receiving communion.
- **It is preferred that Communion be received in the hand.** Please place your hand out very straight and flat to allow the minister to place the Eucharist safely in your hand in order to avoid contact with your hand. If your preference is to receive on the tongue, please wait and approach the minister at the end of the line.
- **Upon exiting the church, please DO NOT congregate near the doors of the church.**
- **After each Mass, the tops of the benches, door handles and other high traffic areas will be sanitized.**
- **Schedule for Lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, greeters and collectors**
  - **We will suspend the use of regular greeters and collectors at Masses for the time being.** As mentioned above, receptacles will be available at the entrance to the church for your donations. **A specially trained group of ushers will be used to assist people to their seats.**
  - **The coordinators for lectors, Eucharistic ministers and altar servers in each parish will contact ministers as to their availability to serve at Masses. We will use less youth servers and Eucharistic ministers during this time.** We would suggest that people who are older and/or with preexisting health issues refrain from these ministries for your safety.

## Part II: Other Sacraments and Rituals

### ➤ Confessions

- **Schedule beginning the week of June 1<sup>st</sup>:**
  - St. Anthony: Monday evenings: 6-7pm (except holidays)
  - St. Elizabeth Seton: Thursday mornings after 9am Mass
  - St. Patrick: First Friday of the month after 7am Mass.
- Confessions **will not** be available before Masses on Saturday afternoon until further notice.
- If these times are not convenient, you may set up an appointment with one of the priests by calling the parish office. Social distancing policies must be followed which might prohibit, in some circumstances, face to face confessions.

### ➤ Sacrament of the Sick

- If there is someone who wishes to be anointed **and is at home**, please contact the parish office to set up an appointment with one of the priests. The priest will wear a mask and gloves and anoint the person using a cotton swab. If the person is **at a nursing home, assisted living facility or in the hospital**, the policies of the particular facility must be followed.

### ➤ Funerals and Weddings

- **Funeral and Wedding Masses may be celebrated** following the same guidelines and policies in place as for public Masses as stated above. **The Rite of Committal** at the grave is allowed in our parish cemeteries, following, once again, state and church guidelines and policies. At this time, family members will not be able to proclaim the Scripture readings nor give any words of remembrance (eulogy) at Mass as the sharing of the microphone and lectern can lead to cross contamination.
- **Memorial Masses** for those who died during the past few months may be scheduled by contacting the parish offices. Because of the Saturday afternoon Vigil Masses as well as already scheduled weddings, we are limited on the number of funerals and weddings which can be celebrated on Saturdays. We would encourage those planning Memorial Masses to consider a weekday or weeknight instead.

### ➤ Baptisms

- Families who wish to schedule a baptism are asked to contact the parish office. Following safety guidelines and directives, we will be happy to accommodate you. Only one baptism will take place at a time (unless from the same family.)

### ➤ Eucharistic Ministry to the sick

- Eucharistic ministers **will not** be able to bring the Eucharist to the sick of our parish at this time as it could place the resident (and the minister) at risk. We do encourage all of our Eucharistic ministers to maintain regular contact with those they would normally visit assuring them of their prayers. We hope to lift this restriction as soon as it becomes safer for all involved.

- **Churches open for private prayer**
  - **All three Churches will be open at the following times for private prayer beginning the week of June 1<sup>st</sup>:**
    - St. Anthony's: M-F 8:30-3pm
    - St. Elizabeth Seton: M-F 9:30am- 12 noon
    - St. Patrick: M-F 9am- 12 noon
- **Eucharistic adoration**
  - Eucharistic adoration will be offered at the following times
    - St. Anthony: Mondays, 6-7pm (except holidays)
    - St. Patrick: First Fridays of the month from 9am -3pm.
    - St. Elizabeth Seton: We are presently looking at this possibility.
- **Parish group meetings**
  - If parish groups plan on meeting, they must first discuss with Fr. Steve and must follow the guidelines put forth by the state, diocese and collaborative offices.
- **Groups not associated with the parishes**
  - The use by various organizations not directly associated with the parishes will be determined on an individual basis, following the guidelines and directives of the state, diocese and collaborative offices.
- **Sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation**
  - **First Communion:** Fr Steve is presently discussing some options with Jonathan Galo and some parents as to how to best celebrate this sacrament with our children, most likely sometime this summer at each parish.
  - **Confirmation:** We are presently awaiting word from the Bishop's Office as to the rescheduling of the Sacrament of Confirmation. As soon as we receive more information, we will contact parents of Confirmation candidates.

**A final word: This plan is our best attempt to meet our primary objectives of celebrating the sacraments reverently and safely. If needed, we will revise any aspects of our plan that are not working well or could be better executed. We can do this! Welcome back!**