

Dear parishioners of St. Michael the Archangel Parish,

During the current phase of COVID-19 precautions, and the loosening of restrictions, we are allowed to reopen our churches for public prayer and worship **up to a maximum of ten (10) participants** not including the celebrant and volunteers needed. Also, Communion may be distributed. For those not attending Mass, but still wishing to receive Communion, prior to coming to the church, **you must participate in the LIVE celebration of Mass FOR THAT DAY on line or on TV**, otherwise **you must recite the Confiteor, the Lord's Prayer and the prayer at Invitation to Communion ("Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof...")** prior to reception of Communion.

For those who want to physically attend Mass, you are asked to call the office and submit your name (include other household members if you intend to come as a group) for the 'Mass Attendance Lottery'. Names will be drawn from the lottery pool. Once your name is drawn, you will be called to confirm your availability to attend the specific Mass, and you will not be eligible for the lottery again until all names in the pool have been drawn, at which point we will start again.

If there is a Mass scheduled for a deceased loved one, and you would like to attend that specific Mass, indicate such when you call to give your name for the lottery.

Parishioners are asked to wear masks/face coverings when arriving to and leaving Mass.

Those under the age of two, those who would have difficulty removing their own masks, and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions which would make wearing a mask difficult, are discouraged from wearing masks. Masked are mandated for when physical distancing is not possible – when you will be within 2 metres of another person for a prolonged period.

I recently visited St. Andrew's church and opened the divider as I noticed the Sun was warming the nave of the church, but not the sanctuary; once the weather is sufficient to keep the church warm enough without requiring the heating system, we will resume Masses at St. Andrew's church, both weekdays and Sundays – I may, when I am there as celebrant, use my personal data plan and cell phone in order to live stream those Masses also.

The priests question the limited numbers permitted in our churches whereas other venues do not have such limits, but are instead based on occupancy levels due to their size. Therefore we ask you to contact your MLA or the Premier and first and foremost congratulate them on the wonderful work they have done at keeping New Brunswickers safe during this pandemic, and ask them to seriously consider allowing churches to open according to social distancing measures based on occupancy. For example: St. Michael's Basilica can accommodate over 130 individual people (factoring in families and couples, it's easily over 200) without opening up the balcony; St. Andrew's can accommodate 50 single people (again, families and couples would put it around 75) on the main floor; St. Michael's Basilica Bishop's Chapel can hold 10 single people without adding chairs. If we respectfully and together make our case to the authorities, perhaps they will concede to reason and consistency and allow greater numbers for religious services.

Currently, Catholics are dispensed from the canonical obligation to attend Mass on Sunday, so if you are concerned for your health, please stay home; also, if you are experiencing ANY cold or flu symptoms, please stay home.

God Bless you all, and stay well.