



## Parish of Saint Michael the Archangel

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### **Saint Catherine of Siena Church**

700 N Delsea Drive  
Clayton, New Jersey 08312

### **Church of the Nativity**

2677 Delsea Drive  
Franklinville, New Jersey 08322

Hello!

I understand that these past months have been challenging for everyone in various ways. The changes that the COVID-19 pandemic caused came rather quickly in March and had profound effects on us all. Many have been forced to stay at home and not to socialize with family and friends. Many people have lost their jobs and families may have had a loved one pass away. The pandemic has affected our religious life, especially receiving the Eucharist on a regular basis and essentially eliminating any normal celebration of Holy Week, the Triduum, Easter, and the Easter Season. As your Pastor, I have greatly missed seeing all of you and celebrating Mass in church rather than in the prayer room in the Rectory. I have greatly appreciated the phone calls, cards and messages that I received. I understand that now there is a *“longing to be back in church, to attend Mass and to receive the Sacraments as we have always done before.”* Believe me, I’m right there with you.

Bishop Sullivan, in consultation with Governor Murphy and the State, has agreed to allow parishes in the Camden Diocese to Re-Open for Phase I, beginning June 9<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> for daily Mass with less than ten (10) parishioners and Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> for weekend Masses). Parishes are to follow strict guidelines that will change the seating capacity of the church, how we enter and exit the church, how we celebrate the Mass, and how we distribute Holy Communion. Bishop Sullivan gave all the pastors the guidelines and based on those guidelines, we each submitted our plan for re-opening our Parishes on May 29<sup>th</sup>. I understand that the information provided will change how all of us are used to attending Mass. It may be especially difficult for those who have come to this church for many years. While just celebrating my 11<sup>th</sup> year as a Priest, I have to tell you I never contemplated anything like this happening during my Priesthood. I don’t believe any Priest ever did.

As we prepare to reopen, because of COVID-19, Bishop Sullivan has granted a dispensation to the Camden Diocese from the obligation of attending Mass during Phase I. This is the same dispensation that went into effect in March. This means that those with chronic health issues and those age 65 years-old and over need to still be very careful with being in large groups of people at this time. There may also be those who have concerns / fears of being with many people in a building and it is understandable that they may not decide to attend Mass. Masses will continue to be live-streamed throughout the Diocese during Phase I.

In determining the reopening plan, the seating capacity of both church buildings needed to be carefully considered. Saint Catherine of Siena Church seats 275 people. Standing room, the cry room, and the choir loft cannot be taken into account. They can't be used. Nativity Church seats 450 people. We needed to calculate capacities at 25-30% and also capacities where social-distancing is taken into account. At Saint Catherine every third pew is a little better than six (6) feet apart. The pews are 10 feet long, so the church can seat **28** single people up to **56** people if every available pew is occupied by a family of four. Nativity's pews are further apart, so every other pew achieves the six (6) foot distance. Nativity can seat **87** socially-distanced, *single* people up to a total of 112 or 135 persons (25 or 30%) depending on family groups. Everyone entering the church is required to wear a face mask (cloth masks are recommended) There will be guides seating everyone who attends. For now, no one can choose their place in the church. We also have to have **ENTRANCE ONLY** and **EXIT ONLY** doors for the church.

We will continue to have the regular weekend Mass schedule, with all Masses at Nativity Church. We will also have daily Mass Monday through Thursday at 9a (our Memorial Day to Labor Day Schedule). You can choose to attend the daily Mass with an estimated smaller attendance rather than the weekend Masses, if you prefer.

I ask that you read the Information Sheet and the Map of the Church several times. They can give a better idea of how to enter and exit the Church, the social-distancing and seating plan, and the distribution of Communion that will be at the end of the Mass. I understand that the Re-Opening plan is a lot of information to take in and accept. **Please take some time to read, digest, and understand it.**

I am thankful to those who have supported the parish over the past months and for those who have volunteered to help in Phase I. We need volunteers to help guide and disinfect the church after Mass. I make a special plea to those in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades preparing for Confirmation. We need your help and you need service hours. Can you help us out occasionally on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning? Please talk or email Ms. Slusarz, Ms. Carder, or Fr. Larry. Thank you in advance!

It is important to remember that the disciples had to adjust many changes after Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. They needed to rely on the gifts of the Holy Spirit to deal with the changes and to trust that Jesus was with them. I ask that you be open to the Holy Spirit during this transition time in our Church, in our community, and in our Parish.

I understand that many parishioners may not have internet access and may have more questions. Please feel free to contact me at 856-881-9155 with any questions you may have. Or if you have internet access, you can contact me at [PSMA.Rectory@gmail.com](mailto:PSMA.Rectory@gmail.com) or [PSMA.Pastor@gmail.com](mailto:PSMA.Pastor@gmail.com). Also, all of this information will also be on our website at <https://www.pasma-nj.com>.

May Saint Michael the Archangel continue to watch over us, intercede for us, guide us, and keep us safe!

Prayers and Peace,

*Lawrence E Polansky*

Fr. Larry Polansky

**PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL**  
**PHASE I: RE-OPENING OF CHURCHES FOR PUBLIC MASSES**

Information Sheet

Hello! Bishop Sullivan has announced that all Parishes in the Camden Diocese can open their churches for public Masses beginning June 9<sup>th</sup> for daily Mass (with less than 10 people) and Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> for the Vigil Mass. All parishes were given guidelines from the Diocese that should implement a plan to have seating capacity of 25-30% of church capacity, keeping strict social distancing and wearing face masks. The transition in re-opening the churches during Phase I will not be easy. There are many things we need to adjust to (*including clergy*). These are changes that were made with the intention to protect all of us. Please respect and keep these instructions to insure that everyone can worship safely. **There is A LOT of information provided below. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with these changes.**

***In Phase I do I have to attend Mass?***

- **No.** Bishop Sullivan has granted a dispensation to everyone in the Camden Diocese from the obligation of attending Mass during Phase I. This dispensation has been the same since March. If you have health issues or are 65 years old and over then please stay home. If you are concerned about being in large groups indoors that is understandable. There are Parishes in the Diocese that will still have live-streamed Masses.

***What time are Masses? Will the Mass schedule stay the same?***

- Our daily Mass schedule has changed for the summer (as it has in previous years):  
Daily Mass will be held Monday through Thursday at 9:00a in Nativity Church, Franklinville.  
The Sunday Mass schedule will remain the same:  
Saturday: 4:00p (Vigil), Sunday: 8:00a and 10:45a all in Nativity Church, Franklinville.
- During Phase I, you can also choose to attend the daily Mass which normally has smaller attendance than the weekend Masses.

***Why are all the Masses being held at Nativity Church? How many people will be able to attend Mass? Will there be changes in where people can choose to sit?***

- In Phase I, the Diocese / State of New Jersey has directed parishes to plan for 25-30% capacity of the church building's total capacity. Nativity Church can hold 450 people in the pews. The cry room / chapel is not included. It is not going to be used. In Saint Catherine Church, which can hold 275, the choir loft and the cry room are also not to be used.
- The capacity for Nativity Church during Phase I is now **87 single** individuals. With couples and families, Nativity Church can hold a maximum of 112 (25%) or 135 (30%) depending upon the final decision of the State of New Jersey. It can use every other pew because the six (6) foot social-distancing requirement is met with every other pew. Because the pews are closer together in Saint Catherine of Siena Church, every ***third*** pew is a little better than the social-distancing requirement. The pews are 10 feet long, so with social-distancing two (2) singles can sit in a pew or perhaps four (4) members of a single family. The aisles are also narrower (Main Aisle = five (5) feet, Side Aisle = four (4) feet to Nativity's seven and a half (7.5) feet. So, by social distancing limits only 28-56 people can be in Saint Catherine Church at a time, well below the 25-30% capacity (69-83).
- In Nativity, we have planned to seat people every other row and six (6) feet apart in the pews (Social-distancing guideline). Families or couples can sit close together; however, those who attend by themselves need to be six (6) feet away from others, which is why there is a sliding scale for the maximum capacity of the church. If **87 single** people come to church, we are at capacity. If families or couples come to church, we can have 25 or 30% of the church filled (up to 112 or 135 people). We cannot have people standing in the back of the church or foyer during the Mass.
- Last year when we talked about applying for the Homeland Security Grant, it was explained that the authorities who inspected our properties recommended that we lock the churches after Mass begins. With the Phase I guidelines, if we reach capacity or once Mass begins, the church doors will be locked. There will be someone outside letting people know when we have reached maximum capacity. If Mass has started, there will be a sign inviting you to return to your car and wait for the end of Mass. When you see people begin to leave, you will be able to come in the main entrance (do not use the doors people are leaving from) and receive Holy Communion. The doors will be opened and you can enter, wearing a face mask, wash your hands using the hand-sanitizer, and take off your mask as you approach the Communion Station. You'll need to put it back on after receiving the Eucharist and go to your car.

### ***Do I need a mask?***

- **Yes**, everyone attending Mass is required to wear a mask (cloth masks are preferred) You are to keep the mask on during the Mass, except when receiving Communion.

### ***How will things be different when people arrive at the church?***

- First, we need to be cognizant of the six (6) foot social-distancing guidelines, even when you are outside on church property.
- Please use the main church doors as you normally did. There are hand-sanitizer dispensers in the Gathering Space as you enter. Please also have your cloth face mask on. The church doors will be open normally approximately 60 minutes before Mass begins. The church has to be cleaned in-between Masses, so please be patient if the doors are not open exactly 60 minutes before Mass time.

### ***How will people be seated in the Church? Can people choose their place?***

- When people enter the Church, there will be individuals guiding them to their seats. Everyone will be required to use the hand sanitizers placed near the doors **before** going to their pews. No one will be able to save places in the pew for those coming later on. We ask that once you are seated, please stay in in your row. During Phase I, we ask people not to socialize before Mass begins or after they leave the church. We will not have the candles available to light.

### ***What changes were made to the Mass? What will be different? Will there be music for Mass?***

- All of the missalettes have been removed from the pews. We will have the readings for Mass printed on a handout that you will receive when entering. If you have a worship aid such as the *Magnificat*, *The Word Among Us*, or *Give Us This Day*, feel free to bring your personal copy and take it home with you. Nothing can be left in the pews.

### ***The restrooms will be locked.***

- One of the ushers / guides sitting in the last row will have the key. We understand that some people have real needs to use the restroom; however, in light of COVID-19 and the need to disinfect the restroom after each use, please use the facilities at home before you come to Mass. We will make sure that if the restroom is in use that only one other person can be waiting in the Gathering Space.

### ***Changes to the way Mass is celebrated:***

- There will be no music during Mass during Phase I ... we can't have a choir and until we get used to the new normal, singing with a mask would be difficult. There is no Entrance Procession, therefore no Entrance Hymn. We will recite the Entrance Antiphon. There are no Altar Servers.
- The Liturgy of the Word will be the same.
- The collection will be taken up at the normal time; however, we will not have the Offertory procession, therefore no Offertory Hymn.

### ***Are we able to receive Holy Communion? When will it be during the Mass?***

- Yes! The Eucharist is the central focus of the Mass. During Phase I, the Distribution of Communion will now be after the Priest gives the Final Blessing.
- The Priest will consume the Eucharist at the normal part of the Mass, then place the Ciboria in the Tabernacle. When the Priest gives the final blessing, he will take off his Chasuble but will still be wearing his Alb, Cincture, and Stole. There is no Communion Hymn, but we will also recite the Communion Antiphon.
- He will then proceed to the Tabernacle and go to the Altar, where he will hold up one host and say, ***“Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”*** The congregation will respond, ***“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.”*** The Priest will put on his face mask and give Communion to the Eucharistic Minister. The Minister will then put on their face mask. The Priest will give the Minister the ciborium. The Priest and Eucharistic Minister will go to their Communion station. There will be a stand at the station with hand sanitizer. The Priest or Eucharistic Minister can place the ciboria on the small table when they feel it necessary to wash their hands, if they touch the hand or the tongue of the individual they are giving the Eucharist to.

### ***Will the Distribution of Holy Communion be the same?***

- **No.** To follow social distancing, we will not have the people come down the aisles shoulder-to-shoulder waiting to receive Communion. The Communion Stations will be located at the front of the church near the sanctuary. A guide will lead people out from each row and section, making sure that everyone is six (6) feet apart in the pew and in the aisle.
- It is important to remember: Please take your mask off **before** you approach the Communion Station. You are not to be wearing any kind of gloves if receiving Holy Communion in the hand. At this time, it is strongly encouraged to receive Holy Communion in the hand. If you want to receive Holy Communion on the tongue, please make sure you receive from the Priest.

### ***When are people supposed to leave the Church? How and what doors do we use?***

- When each person receives the Eucharist, they are to leave the station, put on their mask, and walk towards the exit doors. These are the emergency doors on either side of the church. A suggestion would be to offer a brief prayer of thanksgiving after you return to your car, but before you drive away.
- Per the guidelines, entrances and exits are one way, so please do not attempt to leave the church via the main entrance. It is important to remember that when you exit the church, you are asked to go directly towards your cars. Please remember that social distancing is to continue while you are the church property and sidewalks.

### ***How and when will the church be cleaned?***

- The church will be cleaned immediately after each daily and weekend Mass. We will have a team of volunteers that will sanitize outside the church (doors, handles, railings) and inside the church. Doors, bathroom, and the pews. We have volunteers now but we will need more people to help over the next weeks. The Church has been thoroughly cleaned prior to reopening.

### ***Will Confessions be available?***

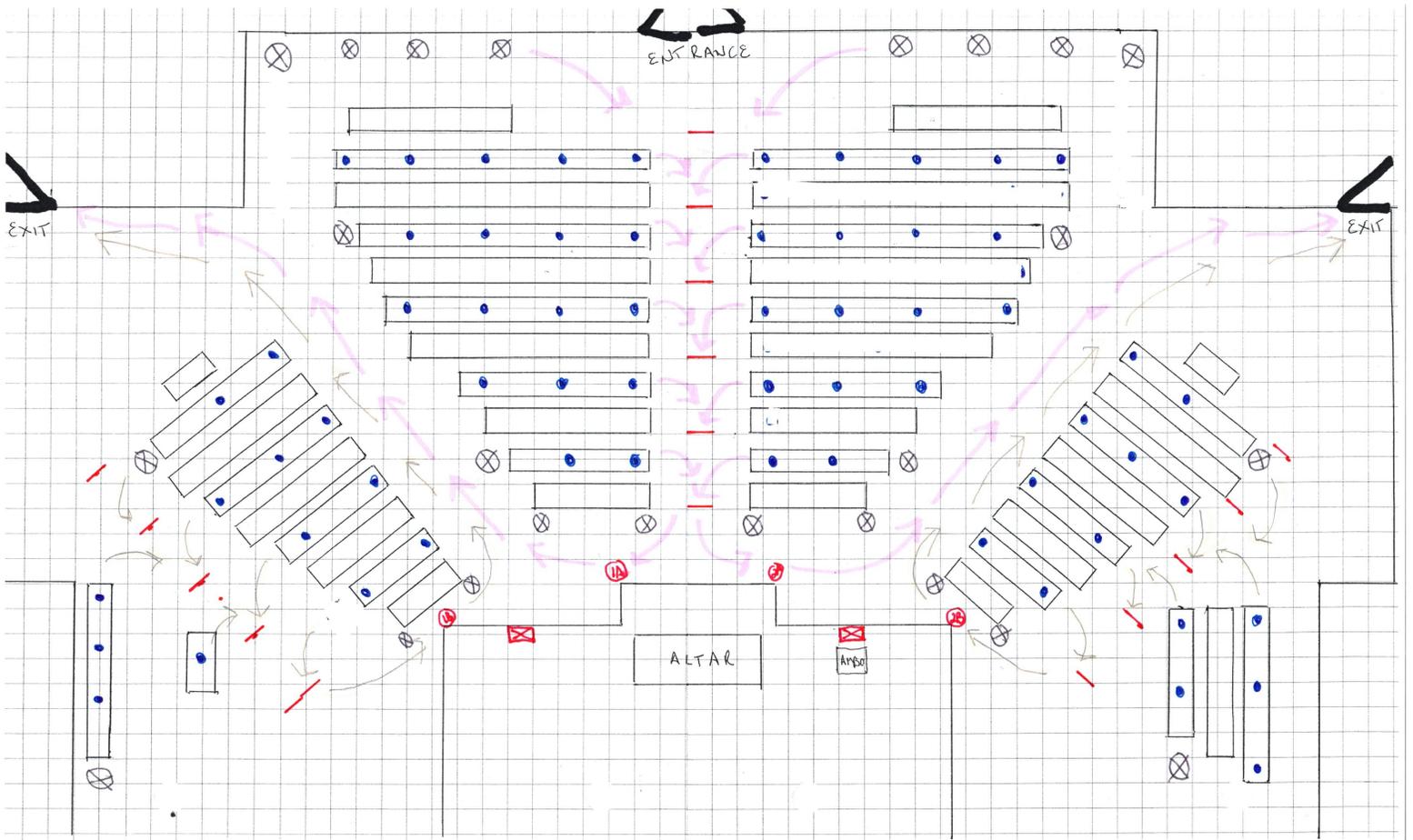
- **Yes.** Even while the churches have been closed, the Sacrament of Reconciliation has always been available by calling the Parish Office to schedule an appointment. Confessions can be heard in the Rectory Conference Room, keeping social distance.
- Confession will continue to be held by appointment and on Saturday from 3-3:30p. The Confessional is set up to maintain social-distancing guidelines. While waiting, please observe the social-distancing guides on the floor. Please wear your face mask, as the Priest will be also. Face-to-face Confession is not available in Nativity at this time. If you wish to go face-to-face, please make an appointment. If you want to perform your Penance in the church, please sit in one of the chairs along the back of the church, realizing we need to clean the doors and areas in church again prior to the beginning of Mass.
- Because of COVID-19 and the guidelines that are currently in place, Catholics in the Diocese of Camden have been dispensed from their Easter Duty for 2020.
- If /when you come to Confession, please leave your phone in your car or turn it off. In this day of Siri, Cortana, and Alexa, we don't know what they might hear or what they might pick up. If you think about it, these voice recognition devices violate the Seal of the Confessional, they're always listening for their name, even when not in use, so please honor this request. Father will not have his cell phone on his person or turned on while hearing Confessions either.

### ***When can Baptisms be scheduled during Phase I?***

- Due to social-distancing guidelines and the need to disinfect the church, Baptisms cannot be scheduled during Mass during Phase I. Baptisms may be scheduled for Saturday morning or Sunday at 1:00p.

### ***Can Viewings and Funerals be scheduled in church?***

- Funeral Masses and Viewings in church may be celebrated in the Parish church as long as all protocols for social distancing are applied.
- Funeral Directors will need to explain the limits on the number of people who may be in attendance and the requirement that they wear face masks.
- All attendees are to be seated before the Funeral Mass begins. The Celebrant alone may conduct the rituals at the doors of the church prior to the Entrance Procession. Holy Communion is distributed after Mass and the prayers of Final Commendation.
- The faithful are to then proceed through the designated exits and proceed directly to their cars.
- The Funeral Directors and staff attend to the casket in the Recessional Procession.



- For Communion, the main sections will receive first, alternating by row and maintaining social-distance. Please remember to remove your face mask before you approach the minister for Holy Communion.
- The main sections will approach either minister at position 1A or 1B and after receiving, will put their face mask back on and exit the church going down the diagonal aisles and using the two emergency exits at either side of the church. In Phase I of the reopening process, entrances and exits have to be separate. Please do not try to go out the main doors.
- When the main sections are completed, the ministers will move to positions 2A and 2B. Parishioners will come up the extreme aisles at either end of the church, once again alternating and maintaining social distances. After receiving, please put your face mask back on and exit the church going down the diagonal aisles and exiting through the emergency exits.
- If there are individuals who were waiting in their car because the church reached capacity or after Mass began, please come to the main doors of the church 10-15 minutes after you see the first individuals leaving. Please maintain social distancing and the main doors will be reopened. Proceed down the center aisle to receive, maintaining social distance as marked on the floor. The ministers will return to positions 1A and 1B to distribute Holy Communion to you. Please take off your face mask before approaching to receive. After you receive, please put your face mask back on and exit the church by going down the diagonal aisles and exiting through the emergency exits.