



Saint John Bosco Church

7113 Columbia Avenue
Hammond, Indiana 46324
(219) 844-9027

August, 2020

Hello to all,

We are hoping that you and your family are well and that as unsettling as all this can be, you are "hanging" in there! Fr. Stan and I are both o.k., however we miss seeing everyone at Mass and at some of the events we would have had, except for the restrictions of the pandemic. That being said, we wanted to share some of the things that have been happening around the Parish and School.

Sunday Liturgies continue Saturday Vigil at 5:00 p.m. and Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Some restrictions still apply, such as: wearing face masks, social distancing inside and outside of the church building, enter and exit through the front doors of the Church, simplified procession, only Cantor and Music Director, Lector, no schedule for Eucharistic Ministers, no hymnals or missals available, number of persons attending Mass is still set at 60-70 people. If you would like to attend one of the weekend Masses, call the Parish Office (219-844-9027) to reserve a spot. If, by chance, you forget then please just come. Since we have not been meeting our maximum numbers, there is room at each of the Masses.

The first day of school for Bosco students was August 18, 2020. Students/families were given the option of In Person or Distance/On Line learning. Currently we have about 180 students with about 60 choosing the Distance/On Line learning platform. Students and staff must adhere to restrictions and guidelines given by the CDC, the State and County Board of Health, and our Diocese. Students and staff wear masks, are socially distanced inside and outside of the school building, self-check for possible Covid symptoms each morning, no sharing of supplies, individual Chromebooks and iPads. In addition, a separate area was set up, in case one of our students seems to be showing symptoms. Because of this restriction we have had to use our Chapel area, as the isolation area. That being said, daily Mass will now be celebrated in the Church.

Cleaning and sanitizing of the Church area is being done on a daily basis. On weekends, this changes to daily and in between Masses. For the School the cleaning and sanitizing is done routinely, throughout the day; especially in those areas that are considered high-touch or used frequently (such as bathrooms, hallways, cafeteria, etc.).

Registrations for Religious Education students and inquiries for those wanting to become Catholic (RCIA) are being taken. RE classes and gatherings for Inquirers (RCIA) will be done

virtually (on-line) on Sunday mornings, from 9:00-10:15 a.m. and will (hopefully) begin Sept. 27, 2020. Curriculum and materials that will be used will be available in hard copy and also digitally.

Lately we have also been having work done around the property. The main vents on the Parish Hall are currently being repaired and replaced. Every so often, after heavy rains, the basement of the Parish Office floods, not every room, but enough to cause concern. Perma Seal came and fixed the problem. We are now in the process of getting estimates to have the basement area cleaned, level out the hallway floor and lay new flooring. Hopefully we will also be able to redo the flooring in the school library, which is also housed in the basement. This is all being made possible by a grant that we recently received from the Diocese. Of course one of our biggest improvements has been the new carpet in the Church. This was a big expense, made possible by your generosity and the generosity of our Ministry groups.

Bishop McClory recently issued a letter, stating that the dispensation from the obligation of Sunday Mass attendance will be extended until Nov. 1, 2020, unless further developments determine otherwise. He also stated that, "to be dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not mean people should stay away from church or fail to keep holy the Lord's Day". That being said, there are a number of Parishes, throughout the Diocese, that livestream Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses. This list can be found at: www.dcgary.org
All you have to do is go to the website and click on the appropriate links. Also if you would like a copy of Today's Missal (which has the Sunday readings and is good until Nov. 28, 2020) please stop by the office and pick one up or call the Parish Office (219-844-9027) and we will mail one to you. The Sunday readings and homily is also posted on our Parish website: www.sjbhammond.org

We realize that this is a very uncertain time for all of us. It is difficult to plan, given the different restrictions put forth by the Health Departments. The challenge is how do we live this "new normal" while still providing and doing what we (or our families) need, in addition to feeling like we are all being productive and not "just stuck". Our hope is Christ; that through Him we will be able to continue navigating our way through the day to day changes.

As always, if there is anything we can do for you or if you have a special prayer intention that we can pray for please contact us.

Continued Blessings,

Rev. Richard Orlencki
Rev. Stanley Sominko