

Dear St Columbkille Family:

We are grateful for your patience and fidelity during this difficult time of the pandemic, when our spiritual and social services have been upended. I believe we all understand that the "shelter at home" and social distancing have helped to save lives. I also know that the silent killer COVID-19, will be with us for a long time.

We celebrate the feast of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) this weekend May 30/31 and we will provide the Sacrament of Reconciliation under the Portico this Saturday, May 30 from 8:30am to 10:00am.

Communion under the Portico will be given this Sunday, May 31 from 9:00am to 12noon.

On this Pentecost Sunday, the readings address the Holy Spirit's coming upon the Apostles and others who were very close to our Lord. The power of the Spirit would unite them with God in a very real way and enable them to witness to Christ's message of salvation for all people. The descent of the Holy Spirit, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, is regarded as the birthday of the Church. It was from that day on that the Apostles went out to teach all nations – just as Jesus had instructed them. Because the Spirit presented them with the blessings of peace and joy, courage and forgiveness, Christ's followers, we, could start to transform the world, in the middle of this pandemic by sharing all that He had revealed to them and to us.

In his letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul reminds the early Christians that we must understand that there is only one Spirit and only through Him can we truly have faith and hope in our Savior. "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit" (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). Every gift of the Holy Spirit is vital to the entire community and each one must be appreciated as part of the whole and a contribution to the Church, not just to an individual. Moreover, every gift is offered according to God's will, not our personal preference or worth. We need to respect all gifts of the Spirit and encourage everyone to value and use the divine guidance and grace God provides. All gifts coming from God must be used for unity, solidarity, respect, love and mercy.

As we begin to re-open St. Columbkille Parish for public masses we will be following the "social distancing" guidelines which require a minimum of six feet of space (in all directions) between individuals. Families may sit together as a single unit.

All parishioners are required to wear a mask and bring hand sanitizer or use the one we provide at entering the church so that you can cleanse your hands before and after Mass. If someone feels sick you should stay home. The Holy water fonts have been emptied and sanitized - the hymn books have been removed from the pews.

You will find 2 baskets in front of the altar for your donations, which will eliminate the interaction between the ushers and the parishioners. Your donation can be dropped off before or after mass. Thank you for your support.

When receiving holy communion, please maintain the social distancing.

As someone said recently: "*Six feet apart is better than six feet under*"

Receive the Host in your hand and then take a few steps away from the priest, move your mask, and consume the Host, and then continue away - six feet apart.

The dispensation of obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been extended until June 28 in our Diocese. If for any reason you do not feel safe coming to church at this time you may stay home and join worship via TV Mass, Sunday 10:30am on local Fox 4. If you want to attend Mass with a small group, you might consider coming on a weekday instead of on weekend.

Weekday mass will be at 8:00am from Monday to Friday and all doors will be available for access to the Sanctuary.

Weekend masses (beginning June 6/7) will follow the winter schedule to avoid large attendance and facilitate the prudent social distancing. Masses will be Saturday 3:00pm & 5:00pm and Sunday 7:00am, 9:00am, 11:00am and 5:30pm.

We start a Communal Rosary followed by the Mariam Novena, every Saturday at 8:00am.

Our Office will open now for the regular hours, Monday to Friday, from 8:30am to 12noon and from 1:00pm to 4:30pm to assist you. Our phone number is 239-489-3973. You also can visit our website: stcolumbkille.com and/or follow us on Facebook: St Columbkille Parish in Fort Myers, Inc.

May the Holy Spirit that comes from the Father and the Son protect and sanctify every one of you.

Stay well, stay safe,

Fr. Lorenzo