

Dear parishioner,

We experienced a positive development last weekend with the first significant jump in Mass attendance in weeks. Welcome back to those now returning! 1,749 people attended our six Masses last weekend, an increase of 321 from the previous weekend, raising the average attendance to from 238 to 292. The greatest number was 521 at 11:00, followed by 445 at the 1:00 Spanish Mass and 250 at the 4:00 Vigil Mass. The other Masses had fewer than 200 people, so if you are looking for a smaller crowd, come to 7:30, 9:00 or 5:00 Mass on Sunday. We are now preparing plans for times when overflow beyond the narthex is necessary.

I hope that this increased attendance trend continues, and people feel safe coming to Mass with the precautions we have in place. Please remember to sanitize your hands upon entry, wear your mask properly over your nose and mouth, and keep six feet away from anyone not in your household at all times. When Communion comes, stay in place, keep your mask on, receive in the hand, and then remove your mask briefly to consume the host once the priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist moves along. A few people have come to church with face shields, but please note that they may be worn in addition to, but not in place of, masks that act as a barrier to particles from your nose and mouth. It is especially important not to remove your mask for prayer responses and singing for obvious reasons. Let's keep ourselves and others safe and by doing those things we can put the minds of others around us at ease as well as limit any chance of virus spread.

It was good to see some of my Brother Knights of Columbus and Columbiettes at 8:30 Mass on Wednesday. They are present to pray for peace and God's blessing on our nation during this time of turmoil and great need, so please join them if you can on Wednesdays whether or not you are a Knight. Ministries, groups, and organizations including the Knights are formulating plans for a safe return to in-person meetings. Among the developments as we reopen are:

- Resumption of Family Faith Formation and Youth Groups this month.
- Addition of Saturday for Adoration, now Monday through Saturday from 9:00 am to 3:45 pm in the Chapel
- Restart October 1<sup>st</sup> of Rosary before and Divine Mercy Chaplet after weekday Masses, with the exception of the Chaplet on Saturday so that the church can be cleared for Confession
- Boy Scout and Cub Scout meetings beginning in October
- Columbiettes resuming meetings next month. Knights of Columbus will hopefully follow suit soon.
- Annual pet blessing Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:30 on the lawn near the outdoor Stations of the Cross. Just remember to keep your pets and you six feet away from others.

St. Agnes has partnered with the Catholic Community Foundation for a "Planning for Tomorrow" life planning offering Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>. Private one-hour sessions from 9:00-3:00 for individuals or couples will cover topics like avoiding guardianship, wills vs. trusts, probate, durable power of attorney, beneficiary designations, healthcare surrogates, advanced directives, financial planning and more. The appointment openings are on a first come, first serve basis. In the midst of a pandemic, it's fair to say that some of us are thinking a bit more about our mortality these days. This kind of life

planning can lead to greater peace of mind. You can reserve an appointment by calling 941-486-4722 or emailing [CCF@dioceseofvenice.org](mailto:CCF@dioceseofvenice.org).

We'll resume making printed bulletins available next weekend. You'll be able to pick them up from the tall stewardship tables in the narthex on the way out of Mass. Scam emails are proliferating around the Diocese and country. If you get an email that appears to be from me or another priest looking for you to do something, please know that we would never solicit gift cards or other funds. The email address is often a giveaway. If it doesn't come from [frbob@stagnesnaples.org](mailto:frbob@stagnesnaples.org), it's not me! Unfortunately, there's not much that can be done other than deleting the email.

During this very active election season, please pray for our nation, candidates, and electorate. Help promote peaceful civility in these times of unrest. The Church is prohibited from promoting or endorsing any candidate or political party and parishioners are asked to avoid active campaigning while on church property. Our country was founded on principles of freedom, and while we may have differences of opinion, we should respect everyone's right to free speech and recognize the dignity of every person made in the image and likeness of God. As a Church, we will do our best to inform consciences on issues important to society and the common good, and then hope and pray people will make wise decisions accordingly. God bless America!

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