# Fifth Sunday of Easter May 2, 2021

Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. — 1 John 3:18



St. Mary Catholic Church 401 Main Street Norway, MI 49870

www.stmarybarbara.org 906-563-9845

St. Barbara Catholic Church W5058 Main Street Vulcan E-mail: saintmary@norwaymi.com Mail: 401 Main St Norway, MI 49870

#### READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 1 Cor 15:1-8; Ps 19:2-5; Jn 14:6-14 Acts 14:19-28; Ps 145:10-13ab, 21; Tuesday:

Jn 14:27-31a

Wednesday: Acts 15:1-6; Ps 122:1-5; Jn 15:1-8 Thursday: Acts 15:7-21; Ps 96:1-3, 10; Jn 15:9-11 Friday: Acts 15:22-31; Ps 57:8-10, 12; Jn 15:12-17 Acts 16:1-10; Ps 100:1b-3, 5; Jn 15:18-21 Saturday: Acts 10:25-36, 34-35, 44-48; Ps 98:1-4; Sunday:

1 Jn 4:7-10 or 1 Jn 4:11-16; Jn 15:9-17

or Jn 17:11b-19

## Parish Personnel

Phone # 906-563-9845

Office Hours: Mon - Fri, 8:30AM-3:30PM

Fax Number: 906-563-7623

Associate Pastor: Fr. Michael Kowalewski

Administrative Assistant: Mary Lindstrom

Music/Liturgy: Mary Jean Menard, 563-9097 (H)

Faith Formation Coordinator: Nancy Degnan

Email: religioused@norwaymi.com

Youth Ministry Coordinator: Michelle Chartier

Email: youthgroup@norwaymi.com

#### **Pastoral Council**

Renee Pollard Vice Chairperson

#### **Finance Council**

Gerald Cieslak - President

Women of St. Mary's:

President Anna Anderson 563-5842

St. Barbara Women's Group: Judy Ball, 563-9408

**Holy Spirit School Principal:** Cathy Menghini

906-563-8817 Email: info@hscsnorway.org

St. Vincent de Paul Store 906-563-7302

Catholic Social Services 906-774-3323

## **Mass Intentions**

5/3 MON No Mass

5/4 TUE 5:00pm SM - Dale Fabrye & Dennis Anderson

5/5 WED 8:00am SM - Ernie Lardenoit

5/5 WED 1:00pm- At Evergreen Meadow - Joe Pellegrini

5/6 THUR 8:00am SB - Jerry Sarnowski

5/7 FRI 8:30am SM - Veronica Ropele

5/8 SAT 4:00pm SM - Michael Willman

5/8 SAT 6:00pm SB - For The People of St. Barbara

& St. Mary Parishes

5/9 SUN 8:00am SB - Rita Reid

5/9 SUN 10:00am SM - Margaret Bal & Margaret Devine

When there is a funeral, daily Mass will NOT be cancelled Sunday Mass will be recorded & available on our website.

WELCOME TO ST. MARY & ST. BARBARA PARISHES We are happy that you decided to worship with us. If you are visiting just for today, we pray that God will be with you on your journey. If you are seeking a church to be part of, we would be honored to welcome you into our parish community. If you are interested in joining our parish family, call the parish office at 563-9845 or email: saintmary@norwaymi.com.

#### **Spirit Lifters**

May 2<sup>nd</sup> - Many people treat their religion as a spare tire - they never use it except in an emergency.

May 3<sup>rd</sup> - Cast out all negative thoughts about yourself today and focus on the gifts you do have.

May 4th - A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor the man perfected without trials.

May 5th - He that planteth a tree is the servant of God, He provideth a kindness for many generations, And faces that he hath not seen shall bless him.

May 6<sup>th</sup> - Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not only in the Bible, but in every leaf of springtime.

May 7th - Keeping house is like threading beads on a string with no knot at the end.

May 8<sup>th</sup> - A mother is the only person on earth who can divide her love among ten children and each child still have all her

**Vocation View-** I you live in me and my words stay part of you, you may ask what you will and it will be done for you. Pray for an increase in vocations to priesthood and religious life. (John 15:1-8)

St. Barbara's Women's League will meet on Tuesday, May 4, at 1:00 in the parish hall. All women of the parish are invited to attend. Let's get back into active participation in the life of our parish. Hope to see on Tuesday.

#### MAY CROWNING at ST. BARBARA on MOTHER'S DAY

We are eagerly looking forward to honoring our mothers, grandmothers, and our Mother Mary on Mother's Day, May 9, with a May Crowning to take place before the 8:00 Mass. Thank you to all of the young ladies who have already signed up to participate. We welcome all girls from preschool through high school to join us. Sign up sheets are available in the vestibule and the side entrance of the church. There will be a short practice tentatively on Saturday, May 8, in the morning. You will be informed of the time as soon as possible. Thank you.

Bulletin Deadline: Please have all bulletin announcements to St. Mary Parish office by Monday noon. These announcements need to be typed, e-mailed or written. (saintmary@norwaymi.com). Thank You.

| <u>St. Mary's</u><br>Collection - April 25, 2021 |            |  |  |  |
|--|------------|--|--|--|
| Envelopes  | \$3,007.00 |  |  |  |
| Loose  | 364.03     |  |  |  |
| <u>Maintenance</u>                               | 20.00      |  |  |  |
| Total:   | \$3,391.03 |  |  |  |

\*Thank you for sharing your Time, Talent, and Treasure in Building God's Kingdom!

Diocesan Collection \$2,235.00

| St. Barbara's<br>Collection - April 25, 2021 |            |  |  |  |
|--|------------|--|--|--|
| Envelope                                     | \$1,802.50 |  |  |  |
| Loose  | 58.00      |  |  |  |
| Children                                     | 2.00       |  |  |  |
| Maintenance                                  | 5.00       |  |  |  |
| Total:                                       | \$1,867.50 |  |  |  |
| *Thank you for sharing your                  |            |  |  |  |
| Time, Talent, and Treasure                   |            |  |  |  |

in Building God's Kingdom!

Diocesan Collection \$535.00

**Thank you,** to all who have continued to support your parish financially, either dropping your envelope in the collection basket at Mass or mailbox by the office door, mailing it in, using online banking or tried our new e-Giving option <a href="https://giving.stmarybarbara.org/give">https://giving.stmarybarbara.org/give</a>

Confessions - Saturdays from 11:00am to noon in St. Mary Church.

#### **An Act of Spiritual Communion**

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally. come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



St. Mary & St. Barbara Parishes will have ado-ADDRATION ration on Friday, May 7th at St. Mary Parish Blessed Surround starting at 9:30am with Benediction at 3:00pm.

 Wearing a mask is required and please keep your mask on the entire time you are in Church. When re-



ceiving communion, keep your mask on, step to the side, lift your mask from the bottom enough to put the host on your tongue, then replace your mask to its normal position, Please do not take your mask off for your wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.

- Sanitize your hands upon entering church and before receiving Communion
- Use the worship aid not the hymnal (dispose of your worship aid after Mass in the waste paper basket. They are not being used for another Mass)
- The holy water fonts, sign of peace, and distribution of the cup are suspended
- These measures are being done for the safety of our vulnerable parishioners.

To request <u>Mass intentions</u>, you can mail in your requests, place them in the collection or drop them in the mail box by the church office. Include your payment and a phone number and Mary will call you to confirm the dates with you.

It Pays to Advertise ~ Our parishes benefit significantly from the ads placed in this bulletin. The advertising dollars pay for our bulletin service. Many thanks to those who have continued to renew, and the new advertisers that joined us this past year. When patronizing those businesses that advertise with us, please let them know you saw their ad on our bulletin. This week's feature ad is:

### YOUR PRAYERS ARE NEEDED

Please pray for our parishioners in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, are homebound and those who suffer in silence. If you need prayers or would like to request prayers for someone else in next week's bulletin, please email or call the parish office at 563-9845.

St. Mary's card sender is Rosemary Haepers - 563-5071 St. Barbara's card sender is Shirley LaValley - 563-5011

Our parishes' bulletin is on-line. To read or print it, go to www.stmarybarbara.org Hope you enjoy this and make use of it when you are out of town.

#### St. Mary and St. Barbara Conference of SVDP

Our Conference continues to help our friends in need with pantry items or other necessities on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday from 9-11 a.m. as in the past.

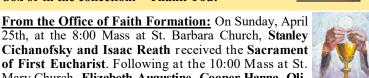
Pantry donations can be accepted at any time during the regular store hours Monday through Friday 9-4. Monetary donations may also be mailed to St. Mary/St. Barbara Conference of SVDP at 431 Main Street, Norway, Michigan 49870.

During May we would appreciate donations of: canned corn, canned green beans, and canned mixed vegetables



Our concern is for all our friends during these trying times and be assured you are in our prayers, especially those affected by the COVID virus. May the Lord smile down on you and your loved ones and keep you safe. God Bless!

Please remember to save your Tadych's Family Market and Super One grocery slips for the Youth Group. They can be dropped off at the parish office mail box or in the collection. Thank You!



25th, at the 8:00 Mass at St. Barbara Church, Stanley Cichanofsky and Isaac Reath received the Sacrament of First Eucharist. Following at the 10:00 Mass at St. Mary Church, Elizabeth Augustine, Cooper Hanna, Oliver Hanna, Kendra Kelly, Harper Larsen, Colton

Lord, Rozalynn Mason, Mason Schultz, Katherine Spence and Violet Vento received the Sacrament of First Eucharist.

Also, on Sunday, April 25th, at 4:30pm at St Mary and St. Joseph Church in Iron Mountain 9 of our High School Students were Confirmed by Bishop John Doerfler. The students are Mackenzie Gilroy, Kassandra Gyselinck, Alexander Linsenbigler, Geno Pellegrini, Zachary Pellegrini, Averie Popp, Gabriel Richtig, Preston Rob-

erts and Tyler Spring. Congratulations to the First Communicants and the newly Confirmed on this most memorable occasion.

What's happening, this week:

5/4 Tue. 10:00am AA Meeting in classroom room use St. Joseph

Center entrance in parking lot

5/4 Tue.1:00pm St. Barbara Women League Meeting

5/6 Thur. 6:30pm Bible Study Class Acts pf the Apostles on

Evangelization

5/7 Fri. 6:00-6:45am Men's Prayer Group in St. Mary Church

5/7 Fri. 9:30am-3:00pm Adoration at St. Mary

5/8 Sat. 11-12pm Confessions at St. Mary



On Good Shepherd Sunday, our parish and all parishes and missions throughout our diocese took up a special collection to support our priests' retirement fund, known as the St. Joseph Association. Collectively, our parishioners have raised

\$3,130.00 to date. We truly appreciate your support. If you were unable to donate last weekend, you may still support our retired priests by returning your envelope marked for the benefit of the "Good Shepherd Collection" in today's collection or by dropping it off at the parish office. Parishioners can also donate to the St. Joseph Association online by visiting dioceseofmarquette.org/giving.

It is time to redo our parish bulletin cover and we have a few advertisers that will not be returning this year. If you have a business and would like to advertise on our back cover please contact Mary in the parish office at 563-9845 for further information.

#### **Online Ongoing Education**

Got a computer, tablet, or smartphone? Then why not learn from the comfort of your home?

We will be studying the Acts of the Apostles and Evangelization starting in April via Zoom video conference. There is no better place to look for guidance in the New Evangelization than the Acts of the Apostles. This chronicle of the Church in action gives us the blueprint for the life and mission of the Church today. Check out our schedule below for class dates.

May 6 - Class 4

Jun 8 - Class 8

May 18 - Class 5

Jun 15 - Class 9

May 25 - Class 6

Jun 22 - Class 10

Jun 3 - Class 7

#### St. Mary Memorial



Each month we list the names of those in whose name gifts have been made to the Memorial Fund at St. Mary Church. They are remembered at the 10:00 a.m. Mass on the First Sunday of each month for one year. The names are inscribed in our Memorial Book, which is on display

in the vestibule. Contact the parish office for more information. Inscribed for the month of April was: Kathy Chartier.



WORDS FROM FR. MARTY: I was born in Marshall, Michigan in 1966. When I was about 4 years old, my parents moved to the U.P. and purchased a small gas station/grocery store in Gulliver. I went to school at Saint Francis de Sales Catholic School for 8 years and then to high school at Manistique Area Schools. After graduation, I worked in the family logging business for about 4 years until I got a job in the Munising area at a local factory/mill. At the same time I was working at the mill, I was also a landlord. I purchased and owned four rental properties for many years. In my early thirties, I began to feel a call to the priesthood for the very first time. I fought this call for many years; however, because of the persistence of the call, I finally said yes and entered the seminary in Milwaukee in the fall of 2006. After being ordained to the priesthood, I had many different assignments: Menominee, Lake Linden, Marquette, and for the last 6 years I have been the pastor of several parishes in the Newberry area. Every one of my assignments have been wonderful and have taught me a great deal. My hobbies are hunting, fishing, and sports. Even though it is going to be difficult leaving the Newberry area, I am looking forward to this new assignment and meeting all of you.

> Yours in Christ, Fr. Marty

# DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE 1004 Harbor Hills Drive Marquette, Michigan 49855 www.dioceseofmarquette.org



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP (906)-227-9115 fax (906)-225-0437

April 24, 2021

Dear Parishioners of St. Mary and St. Barbara,

Greetings in Jesus Christ.

Father Timothy Ekaitis, your pastor, has served your parishes since July, 2010. Father Michael Kowalewski, your associate pastor, has served your parishes since September, 2020.

Effective July 1, 2021, Father Tim will begin a new assignment as full-time Vicar General for the Diocese of Marquette. Father Tim has been involved in many diocesan wide planning efforts including the Priests Convocation Planning Committee, Priests Council and Parish Planning Team. His experience at the parish level, as well as his involvement with diocesan efforts makes him a very suitable choice for this position. As Vicar General, he will assist me in the ongoing management of our Ministry Personnel Department and other ministries in the diocese.

Father Michael will also begin a new assignment as Associate Pastor of St. Peter Cathedral, Marquette, and St. Mary, Big Bay, on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

I have appointed Father Martin Flynn as your pastor. Father Marty looks forward to serving your parishes. He has served in the past six years as pastor of a five-parish linkage that includes parishes and missions in Newberry, Paradise, Naubinway, Grand Marais and Curtis.

I realize that Father Tim and Father Michael are loved and very much appreciated in your communities. Please continue to pray for them and support them as they begin their new work in Our Lord's Vineyard. Although you will very much miss Father Tim and Father Michael, realize that their new assignments will be an opportunity to grow in their faith and to develop their many God-given gifts so as to build up God's Church.

With prayers that your heart be filled with the Joy of the Gospel, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John F. Doerfler, STD, JCL

**Bishop of Marquette** 

May

| Sunday   | Monday                | Tuesday                              | Wednesday   | Thursday   | Friday                                     | Saturday                            |  |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2  | 3                     | 4                                    | 5   | 6  | 7  | 8 Confessions                       |  |
| May Crowing at St. Mary before   |                       | St. Barbara Women                    | Mass at Evergreen<br>Meadow at 1pm  | Bible Study Class<br>6:30pm at St. Mary  | Men's Prayer Group<br>6-6:45am at St. Mary | 11am-12pm<br>at St. Mary            |  |
| 10:00am Mass   | Month                 | League Meeting 1pm                   | meadow at 1pm   | class is Acts of the   | Adoration at St. Mary                      | at Ot. Mary                         |  |
|  | of Mary               | 0 0 1                                |   | Apostles on  | 9:30-3:00pm                                |                                     |  |
| May<br>Crowning  |                       |                                      |   | Evangelization   |  |                                     |  |
| CANADA PA  |                       |                                      |   |  |  |                                     |  |
| 9 Нарру  | 10                    | 11                                   | 12  | 13   | 14   | 15 Confessions                      |  |
| Mother's Day   | 80 T                  |                                      |   | Men's Prayer Group   |  |                                     |  |
| May Crowning at  | Gam the               |                                      |   | 7  | 6-6:45am at St. Mary                       | at St. Mary's                       |  |
| St. Barbara before 8:00am Mass   | Vine you              | K of C 7:00pm                        |   |  | 100  |                                     |  |
| Mother's   | Pranches              | Meeting                              |   |  | onsanother                                 |                                     |  |
| Day  | TAN PERSONAL AS       | _                                    |   | 200  | as have Qed you.                           |                                     |  |
| 23.5. Patert Cs., No.  | 17                    | 18                                   | 19  | O.J.S. Paluch Co., Inc.  | 21   | <b>22</b> Confessions               |  |
| 10   | ME CAMO               | 10                                   |   |  | Men's Prayer Group                         | 11am-12pm                           |  |
| ASCENSION  | S SING &              | Bible Study Class                    | LOVE ONE  |  | 6-6:45am at St. Mary                       | at St. Mary's                       |  |
| Comment of the Commen | TO THE                | 6:30pm at St. Mary                   |   |  |  | The K of C will                     |  |
| ServetAS five 24 to  | A NEW W               | class is Acts of the Apostles on     | HS I YOU  | THE STATE OF THE S |  | take part in the city               |  |
|  | SONG                  | Evangelization                       | LOVE  |  |  | wide garage sale<br>in the St. Mary |  |
|  | E for the No or       |                                      | Payage 19 1 Paya Group  | © J. S. Paluch Co., Inc.   | 3  | parking lot                         |  |
| 23 Pentecost   | 24                    | 25                                   |   | 27 C. J. S. Palucia Co., Inc.  | 28   | 29 Confessions                      |  |
| Control Services Acts  |                       | D''   0   0                          | Holy Spirit School  |  | Men's Prayer Group                         | 11am-12pm                           |  |
|  | ONTO THE SHIT OF ONLY | Bible Study Class 6:30pm at St. Mary | Spring Concert<br>6:00pm  |  | 6-6:45am at St. Mary                       | at St. Mary's                       |  |
| Tongues  | PROCLAIM )            | class is Acts of the                 | O. OOPTIT   |  | Proclaim                                   |                                     |  |
| of<br>Fire   | THEGOSPEL             | Apostles on                          | 4   | Placed   | the Gospet to the exhole world             |                                     |  |
| Descended Upon Them  |                       | Evangelization                       | Chring Concert  | the people the   |  |                                     |  |
| 11.5 MHZ &   | 0.4                   |                                      | Spring Concert  | Lord has chosen  | Fisherican L                               |                                     |  |
| 30 THREE   | 31<br>Memorial Day    |                                      | Er Timothy M 1  | Ekaitic Dactor   | <b>Masses</b><br>Tue. 5pm St. Mary         | St. Mary Church                     |  |
| PERSONS  |                       |                                      | Fr. Tim - fathertim@norwaymi.com Mary - saintmary@norwaymi.com Nancy - religioused@norwaymi.com |  | Wed. 8am St. Mary                          | 401 Main Street<br>Norway, MI 49870 |  |
| A State of the Sta |                       |                                      |   |  | Thur. 8am St. Barbara                      | PH# 563-9845                        |  |
| NIA  |                       |                                      |   |  | Fri. 8:30 St. Mary                         | Fax# 563-7623                       |  |
| VAN Z  |                       |                                      |   |  | Sat. 4 St M & 6 St B                       | St. Barbara Church                  |  |
| ONE GOD  | or Lia Peladulfo, bec | E.J. S. Palmeh Co., Inc.             | <u>iviicneile - msm@</u>  | enorwaymi.com  | Sun. 8 St B & 10 St M                      | 159 Mission Street                  |  |
| ONE GOD  | is I a Peludrico, tos | E.J. S. Palueh Co., Inc.             |   | · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·  |  | Vulcan                              |  |

# DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE 1004 Harbor Hills Drive Marquette, Michigan 49855 www.dioceseofmarquette.org



# OFFICE OF THE BISHOP (906)-227-9115 fax (906)-225-0437

April 27, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Praised be Jesus Christ our risen Lord!

In this Eastertide, it is my hope and prayer that you are filled with the joy of the resurrection of Christ which renews the world.

As I mentioned in my column in *The UP Catholic* on March 12, the priests of the diocese and I have been meeting by video conference to discuss when and how to begin lifting the safety protocol that we have in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering those discussions, consultation with Catholic health care personnel in the UP, and prayerful discernment, the <u>dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days will be rescinded effective the weekend of Pentecost, May 22-23, 2021.</u> If you are unable to <u>attend Mass, you may speak with your pastor who can give you an individual dispensation.</u> Though the pandemic is not over, the level of risk due to COVID-19 is not as high as a year ago. The level of spiritual risk due to prolonged absence from Mass is greater.

In addition, the following safety protocol is in effect through June 15, 2021:

- Church capacity is limited to approximately 50%.
- Churches will be regularly cleaned and sanitized.
- Face coverings that cover both mouth and nose are required except for young children and those who cannot medically tolerate a face covering.
- Keep a safe physical distance of 6 feet from people who are not of the same household.
- If possible, bring hand sanitizer with you and your own cleansing wipes to wipe down the area where you sit when you arrive and when you leave. If you do not have hand sanitizer, wash your hands before you come to the church and after you leave. Avoid touching your face until you have washed your hands.
- Stay home if you are experiencing symptoms such as a fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, or any other symptoms of illness that could be transmitted or could compromise your health.
- Stay home if you have been exposed to a case of COVID-19 according to the quarantine protocol that is in effect. If you have had positive testing, stay at home until cleared by your doctor.
- Collection baskets should not be passed for the collection. Long handled collection baskets could be used if the handles are long enough for the ushers to keep a suitable distance.
- The congregational sign of peace may be exchanged only if there is no physical contact.
- Serious consideration should be given to omitting congregational singing. If there is any congregational singing, it is to be strictly limited. Choirs are to be limited to a quartet with the singers wearing masks and safely spaced from each other and the congregation. Cantors are to be safely spaced from the congregation. Keep in mind that due to the projection of one's voice when singing, singers must be positioned considerably farther apart than 6 feet.
- Holy Water is to be removed from Holy Water fonts. Parishes may make other safe provisions for the distribution of Holy Water, such as making it available in individual, sanitized bottles or touchless dispensers.
- Communion will be distributed under the form of the Sacred Body only.
- You are strongly encouraged to receive Communion in the hand as a temporary measure during the pandemic and as an act of charity toward the minister of Communion and the lay faithful in the Communion line.
- The principal celebrant and assisting deacon(s) should remove their face masks upon entering the sanctuary and keep a safe
  distance from other ministers as much as possible. Lectors may remove their face masks when proclaiming the Word of God.
  Servers and other ministers should wear face masks throughout the Mass and maintain a safe physical distance from other
  ministers as much as possible.
- The ciboria with hosts for the people should be set on a corporal towards the side of the altar. This allows the priest to proffer the words of consecration directly over the host he will consume, with the other hosts on the altar but not directly in front of the priest as he speaks the Eucharistic prayer. If the altar is small, the ciboria with hosts for the people should be covered.

- The celebrant, concelebrants and assisting deacon may receive Communion by intinction, or an individual chalice can be provided for each concelebrant and deacon. Communion should not be given to the faithful by intinction.
- All those distributing Communion should wear a face mask while distributing Communion. They should wash their hands or
  use hand sanitizer after they put on and take off their face mask, before and after distributing Communion, and if they
  inadvertently contact the communicant, etc.
- The Sacrament of Penance is to be celebrated in locations that provide for the confidentiality of the penitent and safe distance between the priest and penitent. In general, confessionals should not be used because they do not provide adequate ventilation and safe distance.
- Baptisms, Confirmations, the Sacrament of Matrimony and Funeral Masses are celebrated with the same limitations on church capacity, physical distancing, etc., as indicated above.
- Mass and the other sacraments may be celebrated outdoors on church grounds.
- Outdoor prayer on church grounds is encouraged, such as adoration, benediction, rosary, May crowning, etc., provided that the people keep a safe distance of 6 feet.
- Parish gatherings that involve food service such as funeral lunches, coffee and donuts, etc., are permitted according to the health department regulations that are in effect.

Moreover, because the circumstances vary in different parts of the diocese, <u>pastors have the discretion to implement additional safety</u> <u>protocol in their parishes</u>, and to extend any or all the above protocol beyond June 15. <u>Please consult with your parish for the protocol that is in place there</u>. These are difficult decisions, and I give the pastors my full support for the decisions that they make in this regard.

I encourage you to seriously consider receiving a vaccination for COVID-19. It is morally permissible to receive the vaccines currently available, and it is a good way for us to show our love and concern for others by limiting the spread of disease in time of pandemic. I am fully vaccinated, and I am happy that I made that choice. I invite you to do the same.

As we celebrate the upcoming feast of Pentecost, let us pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit for our spiritual renewal and the renewal of the whole Church. Now is the time to grow more fervent in the practice of our faith, particularly in the celebration of Mass.

In Sacred Scripture, heaven is often compared to a wedding banquet. Yet we do not have to die to begin to partake in it. Every time we celebrate Mass, we are participating in the eternal worship of God, and we share in the heavenly banquet of Christ's Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist is not just a sign of Christ's presence. The bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Thus, we receive Jesus himself in Holy Communion. We are joined to him intimately and receive grace beyond our comprehension. We cannot fully share in this banquet by watching it on television any more than we can share a meal with family and friends virtually. We must be present to participate fully.

To help illustrate the importance of the Mass, let us look at an event in the early history of the Church. During the persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperor Diocletian in the year 304 AD, a group of Christians in northern Africa were arrested for celebrating Mass. The notes of the raid and interrogation have been preserved.

When the owner of the house in which the Mass was celebrated was asked why he did not prevent this from happening, he responded, "I could not because without the celebration of the Lord's Day we cannot live." These Christians were eventually put to death.

For these Christians, participating in the Mass was the most important part of their life. Jesus in the Eucharist was the source and summit of their lives. So important to them was participating in the Mass, that they died for it.

It has been some time now since we resumed the public celebration of Mass. If you have been afraid to return to Mass or have just fallen out of the practice of coming, be inspired by the example of these early Christians and come back to Mass. The Lord is inviting you to share in the heavenly banquet. Do not ignore his invitation.

How important is the Mass for us? The owner of the home said when asked why he did not stop the Mass from being celebrated in his home: "I could not because without the celebration of the Lord's Day we cannot live." Let us strive to say the same.

May the Lord bless you in abundance as you participate in the celebration of the Mass.

With prayers that your hearts be filled with the Joy of the Gospel, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John F. Doerfler, STD, JCL

Bishop of Marquette

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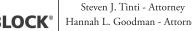
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