

Wednesday, November 10, 2021
Memorial of Pope St. Leo the Great

Dear family in Christ,

Last week the Our Lady of the Lake Transition Committee met for the final time. I would like to express my gratitude for all of them for their hard work and dedication these past 18 months for all their counsel and insights. They all helped me to make the best and most reasonable decisions for the safety and well-being of our parish family. We were able to maintain a prudent middle ground with our directives. They were not too strict/restrictive nor too lax/permissive. There is always virtue and holiness in the middle.

From the counsel, advice, and good conversation from our committee, here are the decisions that I am making as your pastor moving forward.

- Even though the Transition Committee is formally ending it was recommended that we form a health/wellness committee here at the parish to continue to make sure our parish is the safest it can be and we are doing everything we can do to preserve the health and well-being of all our parishioners and guests. I think that this is a great idea. I have decided to form this committee here at our parish. I would welcome especially to serve on this community our parishioners that are in health care and service professions. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please call me or email me.
- Mask wearing and getting vaccinated has always and will continue to be encouraged at Our Lady of the Lake during the course of this Pandemic. It is especially encouraged if you are not feeling well and/or are taking care of people that are sick to definitely wear a mask and consider staying at home. It is an act of charity for our brothers and sisters. *I reiterate Bishop Persico's most recent decree: "Both for their protection and that of others, the following are strongly encouraged to wear masks while in church: 1. Those not fully vaccinated and those more comfortable doing so. 2. Everyone regardless of their vaccination status in counties where the transmission rate is substantial or high, for as long as that situation persists."* This is not mandated. It is the choice of the individual and the choice of families. Mandates are not consistent with the rights and freedoms that are ours as Catholics and Americans because they are in conflict with the role of free will and the place of conscience in the lives of individual members of the Church and citizens.
- The option of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue also has been and will continue to be preserved here at Our Lady of the Lake. This is your right in Canon Law and will not be taken away from you. Those that wish to receive Holy Communion on the tongue need not wait to go last and be at the end of the line. This is a form of segregation that is in conflict with our Catholic faith. Deacon David, myself, and any of our extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion will

continue to maintain the practice of wearing masks while distributing Holy Communion for the time being along with being very careful to sanitize our hands during the distribution of Holy Communion.

- The obligation to attend Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is back. If you are able to attend Mass and you don't you are in a state of serious (mortal) sin and placing your soul in grave danger. This is a very serious matter! With that said, those that are seriously sick and/or are taking care of someone who is seriously sick is dispensed from this obligation by the law itself.
- As we all received from the Bishop's decree last weekend we are returning to the universal law of the Church in kneeling after the Lamb of God until our reception of Holy Communion. When we return to our pew the proper posture is now kneeling or sitting. The 1st Sunday of Advent (11/27, 11/28) is when this takes effect.
- Some of the new things that were added during this time of transition will remain. Some of these things are the hand sanitizer stations, the collection basket remaining near the Baptismal Font, the use of ushers to facilitate hospitality and the safe and reverent flow for the reception of Holy Communion, and the touchless Holy Water fonts. The use of hymnals in the pews to remain in the pews will also be returning.
- Because of the concern of big crowds at Christmas Masses we will be adding one more vigil Mass on Christmas Eve at 7:30pm. Thus, our Christmas Masses are 4:30pm and 7:30pm (Christmas Eve) and Midnight (12am), 8am and 10:30am (Christmas Day).

I know there is a lot of information here. As always please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions and/or concerns. I am also grateful to all of you for your great flexibility and cooperation during these months of transition to make our return to Holy Mass and public worship so seamless. Continue to know always of my love and prayers for you all!

Peace of Christ to you all!

Fr. Dan