

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Mother Teresa Parish,

Greetings of Christ's peace to all!

In the midst of a global pandemic, we have experienced a national civic unrest crisis. We all agree that the death of George Floyd calls for racial justice and for systemic change. However the violence and looting came alongside the peaceful protesters have caused much fear and destruction in our city and neighborhoods. Many roads have been blocked by Chicago police and state troopers and many businesses have been closed their doors again. We are against violence, but for peace and justice.

For the past ten days, every day we are confronted with news of riots and warnings of possible violence in our neighborhoods. This might continue for the near future. Amid all this, you probably also have heard by now that our churches in the Archdiocese of Chicago are allowed to reopen as early as the weekend of June 6 and 7. While this is good news, a sign of hope, we are still in the middle of two global and national crises. With abundance of caution for the safety of our parishioners and for others, after some prayerful consideration and consultation, taking seriously the words of our Bishops---"it is more important to reopen right, rather than fast," I have come to the following decision for our parish's reopening for public mass:

St. Barbara Church reopens on the weekend of June 20 and 21 for public mass. By then, our Church would be allowed to have about 250 people for each mass (20% of the seating capacity). We will resume all three of our Sunday masses (5pm, 6am and 9:30am). Based on our attendance before COVID 19, we should not have any problems with the limited number of people that our Church is allowed to have.

St. Therese Church will reopen on the weekend of June 27th and 28th. We will have our 8am and 10:30am mass. We will not have a problem with the number of people attending the 8am mass. We will closely monitor the 10:30am mass by using both an email and a phone reservation system.

Public weekday masses will be resumed on Monday June 22nd. The schedule remains the same: 8am Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at St. Therese and 8am Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at St. Barbara.

Below are a few more pointers you need to know:

1. Catholics are still absolved from Sunday obligations.
2. We will continue to offer online masses until our churches are fully reopened.
3. Our Parish Reopening Leadership Team is working to be certified for phase II.
4. Our Liturgical Minister Coordinators are working to schedule ministers.

5. Our staffs are prepared to resume our weekly bulletins.
6. St. Barbara Church will be open again on Sundays June 7th and 14th from 9:30am to 11:30am for PRIVATE PRAYERS. Volunteers from our Reopening Leadership Team will be present to help and serve.
7. People over 65 and/or with preexisting health conditions are strongly encouraged to stay at home until the CDC relaxed its recommendation.
8. Wearing facial masks and social distancing are required in Church.

Stay safe and well. You and your loved ones are in my prayers. Please keep me in yours.

Blessings!

Fr. Francis Li