

SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ponca City, Oklahoma

April 18, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Dear Parishioners:

What a joy it was to see so many people back at Easter Masses! Between St. Mary's and St. Francis, we had over 800 people attend the Easter Vigil/Easter Masses, and it was so great to see servers and lectors back! As vaccinations continue to increase and cases continue to decrease, it's my hope that we can start returning to more of a "normal" feel at Masses and regular parish life. We are requesting that we be allowed to say Masses at Via Christi again, and we will let you know when that happens.

We are starting a return to normalcy on April 24th when, as the letter in the bulletin from the archdiocese says, the dispensation from attending Sunday Mass will be lifted and we will return to normal Mass attendance. **Please read the letter from the archbishop and the updated COVID guidelines that are included in the bulletin** as they will answer many of your questions.

Since March 2020 we have been posting Masses on YouTube, and while I'm aware that many are grateful that we have done that and that has been a lifeline to the faith for more than a few folks, it appears that we have accidentally shot ourselves in the foot and the convenience of the on-line "Masses" has, in some people's minds, replaced the need to actually physically attend Mass. In his letter, the archbishop asks that we delete Masses immediately after they go live so that they can't be viewed at a later time. The reason he has asked for this, and I have heard this myself more than a few times, is that people are not returning to Mass because they can just watch it on TV, and it's becoming a hindrance, not a help, to the faith. We (Fr. Zak and I) have never gone live with our Masses except the Easter Vigil last year, and everyone said it was so choppy it was almost unwatchable.

What we've been doing is recording the Mass, and afterwards uploading it to YouTube so it could be watched later and with better video and audio quality. However, as I mentioned, this has become an excuse for lots of people to not attend Mass. I know this doesn't apply to all, but it applies to enough to warrant a change. Some churches will still have their Masses livestreamed, but we do not have the ability to livestream our Masses in a way that upholds what the archbishop is asking us to do. So, April 24th will be the last time that we record and post Masses on Facebook and YouTube. I know that this comes as a disappointment to some, but I've heard the "I'll just watch Mass later on TV" excuse too many times, and while mostly everyone is going out to eat, shopping and working in person, but staying away from Mass, I hope this is a way to encourage people to come back to Mass and receive the Eucharist.

As societal life and church life begins to move more back to normal, it's my sincere hope that the sacramental life of everyone reading this will return back to normal as well. I'm also aware that the people reading this right now are our active parishioners, so please invite your fellow Catholics back to Mass! There is room for social distancing

in the front of Church. For those of you who are homebound and are reading this, Fr. Zak and communion ministers will be stopping by and bringing you communion as normal. Also, Christ the King Catholic Church in Oklahoma City livestreams all of their Masses, as well as EWTN, so I would encourage you to check those out. Getting a system that is capable of livestreaming might be a topic of conversation in the future, but right now I really want people to get back in the habit of coming to Mass. A spiritual communion pales in comparison to actual communion, and I, as your pastor, am responsible for feeding you, and in some cases, nudging you back to the sheepfold.

My intention in what I do is never to be mean or spiteful or difficult. I always try to be as kind and merciful and as accommodating as I can be, while still being faithful to Christ and His Church. So please, if you are able and don't fall under the archbishop's dispensation, rejoin us at Church and resume a normal sacramental life! Jesus Christ is waiting for you at the altar! I hope to see you at Mass, and please know of my prayers!

In Christ,

Fr. Larson

Weekly Income Report April 11, 2021	
Weekly Collection:	\$10,105.85
Faith Direct:	\$ 7,317.42
Minority Groups:	\$ 265.00

Masses For The Week

- MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2021**
12:10pm †Julie Greenlay/Michel Gray
- TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2021**
12:10pm **NO MASS**
- WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2021**
8:20am †Leo Jueschke/Sue Rice
- School Masses are NOT open to the public due to COVID-19**
- THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2021**
9:30am Mass (*Newkirk*)
- FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2021**
7:00am †Janice Belt/Paul & Nancy Whitney
12:10pm †Marcy Dimond/Her Family
- SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021**
9:00am †Carl Poulant/OK State Knights of Columbus
5:00pm Spec. Int. Fr. Deva
- SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 2021**
8:00am †Ed O'Neill/J.B. & Lois Parsons
9:30am Pro Populo (*Newkirk*)
11:00am †Keith Behara/Chuck & Suzie Greenwood
1:00pm *Spanish Mass/ Pro Populo*
7:00pm †Fred Spellman/Steve & Janice Connelly
- Unless specified- ALL Masses will be in the CHURCH**

Please Pray For those who need prayers: Charlotte Meyer, Charlene Vap, Dora Behar, Cindy Wardlow, Colleen Schiltz, Jeanne Glaser, Patsy Hastings, Eileen Spellman, Linda Courtney, Martha Begwin, Donna Schlitz, Joe Badley, Sandy Hudack, David Courtney, Sr. Mary Clare, Sallie Williams, Mike Kemmerer, Beth Whitney, Susan Kothe, Doug Revard, Mike Hammer, Sue Rice, Sherry Burgell, Pamela Cline, Kim Maxson, Joyce Reutter, Jarrett Auschwitz, George Rahme, Jim Johndrow, Mandi Holba, Tommy Hunt, Nancy Whitney, Glen Ramage, Janice Loftis, Rosanne Rhodes, Gabe Dietz, Phyllis Moriarty, Julian (JuJu) Aguilar, Ben Delapaz, Tarryn Stewart

THE WEEK AHEAD April 19-25, 2021		
Monday	6:30pm	LADDER OF ASCENT, McGurk Room
Tuesday	7:00pm	RCIA, McGurk Room
Wednesday	11:30am	FINANCE COUNCIL, McGurk Room
	6:30pm	YOUTH GROUP, Gym
Thursday		
Friday	10:30am	CONFESSION, Church
Saturday	3:30pm	CONFESSION, Church
Sunday	9-11am	PFIZER VACCINE AVAILABLE, Parish Hall
	6:00pm	CONFESSION, Church

GOLF TOURNAMENT
SMCS Benefit Golf

Tournament

Saturday, May 1st

Ponca City Country Club

Contact Emily Hodgson (580)304-2744 to sign up or to become a hole sponsor.

Next week we will take up the **Catholic Home Missions Appeal**. Today, over 40% of dioceses in the United States and its territories are unable to fund the essential pastoral work their communities need. Your support of this appeal helps them meet these faith formation and sacramental needs. Please prayerfully consider how you can support this appeal. More information can be found at www.usccb.org/home-missions.

Ushers will begin taking up collections during Mass beginning April 17th/18th. However, for those who prefer; baskets will be available at all the Church entrances for your convenience.

COVID-19 VACCINE Available

Sunday, April 25, 2021 we will have the Pfizer Vaccine available to all those who want to receive this vaccine. Troy Simons, pharmacist for Family Discount Pharmacy, Ponca City, OK will be in the Parish Hall between the 8AM and 11AM Mass to administer the Pfizer vaccine. If this is your 1st Shot, you are welcome; if this is your 2nd Shot, you are welcome. There will be a speaker at all the Masses this weekend to provide more information.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month



National Blue Sunday "a day of prayer for abused children and those who rescue them" is Sunday, April 25, 2021. Wear blue this day and join us in praying for children who have been abused, and for the prevention of future abuse. Visit: <https://www.bluesunday.org/>

Take Safe Environment Training to learn how to identify and prevent abuse!



Last Zoom Meeting
Wednesday, April 21
7:00 PM

Join us for our last check in of the 2020-21 school year!



JH/SH Youth Group will be this Wednesday from 6:30-8PM. Our seniors will be the guests of honor. **Bring a snack to share!**

Are you ready and willing to attend the **MAY Birthday Brunch?** Please contact Jan Neylon at 580-767-1890 and let her know of your intention so her ladies can be prepared!