



St. Ignatius Catholic Church

3400 S.E. 43rd Avenue, Portland Oregon 97206

August 27, 2020 Feast of St. Monica

Dear St. Ignatius Parish Family,

“There are years that ask questions, and years that answer,” as author Zora Neal Hurston writes. This is one of those questioning years – 2020! Doesn’t it seem hard sometimes to keep up?

What will St. Ignatius parish look like in the fall? This is a question your church and school leadership have been holding in prayer all through the summer. And thank heaven that you, our church and school families, have been holding us in prayer as well, enabling so much good work and ministry to continue during these days of pandemic. So much has changed in such a short time – but what has remained steady is your kindly, discerning, and prayerful support of our St. Ignatius mission: to respond to the urgent call of the Risen Jesus in our times.

How does a parish deal with a pandemic? When COVID-19 appeared, our school transformed with astonishing agility into a model of Distance Learning, a feat that has been the envy of many. Our church continues to offer online, recorded weekend Mass; and your administrative teams (Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and the Stewardship Team) have been in consultation with each other, imagining our best path forward.

How have church and school finances been affected by the pandemic? The weekly church offertory donations are down (29% less from March through July compared to last year). The school lost revenue with the cancellation of the school Jogathon in April. The Paycheck Protection Program has helped us avoid staff layoffs. But this coming year both church and school will have less income than in previous years, while some expenses will rise and other expenses will decrease, e.g., utilities. Maintenance and repair projects are on hold. The Parish Finance Council and SAC Finance Team are re-evaluating this year’s budgets in light of the pandemic’s impact over the past five months.

What has been happening on the St. Ignatius campus during the summer months? In July, we hosted three Ordinations and a Mass of Thanksgiving for Jesuits West, celebrating the journey into priesthood for San Mai, SJ, Perry Petrich, SJ, and David Romero, SJ. Our new priest, Fr. Billy Biegler, SJ, joined our staff on August 1st. His energy and joy will help in vitalizing all our ministries. Our St. Vincent de Paul food pantry operated with full service. “Open Church” time for private prayer has been available since May, every Tuesday and Thursday from 11am to 1pm, stewarded by a hearty group of volunteers who meet and greet parishioners, and sanitize the building. Our Facilities Manager, Steve Scopelleti, along with principal Kelli Clark, have prepared for the contingencies of this coming fall -- adjusting as needed with the almost-daily shift of guidelines for what starting the school year will look like on September 8.

What programming can we expect to see in the 2020/21 year? RCIA is in full swing, preparing for a new year of inquirers, even as our 2020 candidates patiently wait for the rituals to welcome them into the church. The same is true for our Sacramental Prep families – a new class begins this fall while last year’s class looks forward to their First Communion sometime in September. Confirmation is gearing up for a year unlike any other, as will be IGNITE, our Sunday-evening Adult Faith Formation program. IGNITE will be an online experience this year, inviting all to come help set the world on fire as we journey through the lives of the saints and mystics. “Let’s go to Mass....,” a new opportunity, led by Parish Music Director Joseph Byrd, will guide participants through great settings of the liturgy, from a variety of musical traditions and cultures. And in order to begin the year safely, our St. Ignatius School will offer the best in Distance Learning through October 16 -- then reevaluate the possibilities of in-person learning.

When will the church reopen for public Mass? On Tuesday, September 8, we will resume daily Mass at noon on Monday through Friday for up to 50 worshippers. See the website or bulletin for details about signing up. Or call the parish office and leave your name and phone number, and you’ll receive a call back (503 777 1491). And following the guidelines of the State and the CDC, we will reopen for weekend Mass once we are in Phase 2, which would welcome up to 100 people into the church building proper, and allow for time before and between Masses to sanitize the environment.

How can I be involved, even during a pandemic? Pray for our country, especially in this election season, for responsible citizenship. Pray for those infected by Covid-19 or who have lost their lives to the virus, and for their families who grieve their death. Pray for people harmed by racial violence. Pray for people out of work or worried about their job. Finally, pray for our children as they return to school with distance-learning, and for their parents who struggle to work and provide childcare while their kids have class at home. Pray for a vaccine so we can get back to a full church at Mass once again.

How can I support the financial needs of St. Ignatius Parish? So far we have not had to lay off staff, but if our income does not increase by \$3,000 a week, we will have to reduce staff hours. It is hard to put money in the weekly offertory collection when there is no weekend Mass. So I urge you to enroll for online giving. Call Patty Frangipani at the Parish Office and she will help you – 503 777 1491, x. 221.

If you have been impacted negatively by the pandemic, please know we understand you may need to adjust your giving. If you are one who can give more, now is a great time to do so. With an expectation that income sources will be down, support is needed now more than ever to keep our ministries operating.

The uncertainty about when this pandemic will end is crushing people. Social isolation, fear about job loss, worry about our kids’ education, and even tensions among family members about the election are fraying people’s nerves. Now more than ever we look to the consolations of a faith community. Our mission is to seek out the most vulnerable and stand with those most severely afflicted. Please do your part to pay for our mission. We cannot do it without you. And remember, the Lord will not be outdone in generosity.

Gratefully in the Lord,

Fr. Craig Boly, S.J., Fr. Billy Biegler, S.J., Fr. Dan Sullivan, S.J., Kelli Clark, Joseph Byrd and the rest of the parish church and school staff