



August 20, 2020  
*Memorial of Saint Bernard*

Dear friends,

Happy memorial of Saint Bernard! I hope that your summer is going well, especially with the extra sun and warmth that we've been enjoying over the last week or so.

### **Some words of thanks**

I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on how things are going for our parish and share with you some plans for the future. Perhaps the biggest piece is to express thanks for your grand support of the Carmelite Sisters at Saint Joseph monastery. As Mother Maria Valla was quick to point out to me when I arrived, they are in fact members of Saint Mark parish – living just above the southern border of our parish boundary! This year's 'Christmas in ~~July~~ August' was a resounding affirmation of the care you have for their community, as both fellow parishioners and in their special vocation of prayer for us all.

Following gratitude with gratitude, I would like to publicly thank (albeit *en masse*, rather than individually) the many volunteers who have helped make our Sunday Masses, several funerals, and even a wedding possible during these times. Often coming an hour early, staying throughout the entire service, and sticking around until the last person has departed, these folks have made our communal celebrations possible. Please join me in thanking our volunteers, especially in person if you should have the opportunity to come to Mass or another gathering at Saint Mark parish.

### **Expanding Mass and prayer times**

Now that we have a better handle on how to implement and fulfill state & archdiocesan guidelines, we find ourselves in the happy position of being able to offer more opportunities to come to pray in the church, go to confession, and attend Mass. **Starting next Monday (August 24, 2020), daily Mass will be offered at the parish church (see the schedule at the end of this letter).**

Daily Masses will be limited 25 people initially, though we could have as many as 100 once we establish a corps of daily Mass volunteers (call us if interested!). Remember that masks are still required. No registration is needed, though you will be asked to check in so that we can offer contact tracing if a case should be reported. Because we must keep track of how many people arrive, please plan on coming at least 10-15 minutes early (20-30 minutes early would be great!).

The Mass schedule will look very familiar, but with one notable change: we will be moving our Wednesday Mass to the evening – it will be offered at 6:30pm, with confessions being heard from 5:00pm to 6:00pm. It is my hope that by offering an evening opportunity for confession and mass during the week, more folks who work during the day and families whose children have school obligations will be able to come to a daily Mass.

Finally, we will begin opening the church for private prayer during the week, from 9am to 4pm. Although our parish office is not open for business, parish opening for private prayer will follow



the parish office schedule. If you plan on coming to the parish for private prayer, this will be important to keep in mind. **If the parish office is closed, the church will be closed.** We will post notice in the bulletin on those occasions (for instance, on major holidays).

For those who are yet be unable to attend, please rest assured that we will continue to livestream daily and Sunday Masses. We are also in the process of finalizing our network & media upgrades in the parish church, which should vastly improve the experience from home. If you are homebound for any reason, **please feel free to call me for a home visit.** I would love to bring you the sacraments (and maybe the latest bulletin!), to offer a friendly ear, and just visit for a while.

### **Parish programs, faith formation, and beyond**

As you know, we hired a new Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation (Kirk Altenhofen) over the summer. He has been working hard to coordinate with our key volunteers to lay plans for RCIA, Confirmation, and First Holy Communion classes. While we hope to be able to have in-person sessions in some capacity, we are also making contingency plans for remote teaching. If you or someone you know is interested in receiving the sacraments, please direct them Kirk's way! Even (especially!) in these strange times, the work spreading the Gospel continues.

### **Laboring together**

Over the last week, I have been asking for volunteers from among those who watch our live streamed Masses and at Sunday Mass – I would like to repeat that invitation here as well. Recipes require multiple ingredients, meals take whole-family participation to prepare, and the life of a parish depends on more than just a priest and his staff – now more than ever!

We've been blessed by the generosity of many volunteers. We also need to be sure that we don't burn through any individuals or groups who might need some time away or just a lighter load. Please prayerfully consider if you might be in a position to help out with Mass (daily or Sunday), one of the faith formation programs, or as a backup when an unexpected need suddenly arises. No offering is too small, and your assistance will be happily received according to your availability.

If these last few months have proven anything, it is that we have an innate need for Jesus and His Church. As that desire has grown, so has the outpouring of faith and generosity from so many. Despite discouragements and struggles, there have been many fruits of God's grace working in us and within our community. I hope you are proud of how our community continues to come together – I know that I certainly am!

Let us continue to labor together and lift each other's intentions to the Lord. I look forward to the day when we can offer our prayers together, but until then know that you are in my prayers daily.

Yours in Christ,

Father Maurer



## **Saint Mark parish**

### **Mass & confession schedule**

(updated August 20, 2020)

#### **Sunday 10:00 am Sunday Mass**

##### **Monday**

9:00 am – church open  
9:30 am – daily Mass  
4:00 pm – church closed

##### **Tuesday**

9:00 am – church open  
(no daily Mass)  
4:00 pm – church closed

##### **Wednesday**

9:00 am – church open  
5:00 pm - confessions  
6:30 pm – daily Mass  
7:00 pm – church closed

##### **Thursday**

9:00 am – church open  
9:30 am – daily Mass  
4:00 pm – church closed

##### **Friday**

9:00 am – church open  
9:30 am – daily Mass  
4:00 pm – church closed

##### **Saturday**

9:00 am – church open  
9:30 am – daily Mass  
3:00 pm - confessions  
6:00 pm – church closed

(Sunday Masses will be offered outdoors, daily Masses will be offered in the church)