

Sample Letter from the Pastor

March 23, 2020

Dearest Parishioners,

During this time of the Coronavirus pandemic, no doubt everyone's life has been subject in some way to the disruption it has caused. We endure in faith through it all.

Even though we may not be assembling together, we remain united across our homes and communities as one Body of Christ in communion with each other and with God.

St. Paul told the early Christian communities that the Father of mercies, "encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God" (2 Corinthians 1:4).

In that same spirit, we pray for every single person throughout the world who has been infected by the virus and particularly for the souls of those who have died. We also pray for protection for ourselves and our loved ones and a swift end to the pandemic everywhere.

As you know, for the foreseeable future, all public Masses in our diocese have been suspended or the obligation to attend Mass has been made optional. Please know that all priests continue to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in private for all our parishioners and their intentions. The grace of the Mass has not been cancelled!

During the period of time where we cannot physically attend Mass, however, we must be extremely diligent in maintaining our connection to the Eternal Sacrifice.

To that end, I include here one way of staying in touch with the rhythm and grace of the liturgy, even while not in church. The attached program, *Spiritual Communion Service at Home*, is a beautiful and simple way to access the elements of our regular Mass while "in exile" from it, so to speak. This type of informal prayer service has a rich and varied history in the life of the Church.

This *Spiritual Communion Service* is based on the Sunday liturgical readings and includes reflections and elements of the Mass for maintaining our union with the Holy Sacrifice itself. Needless to say, this prayer service is not a substitute for Mass! It is not

a sacrament. It is a sacramental, which sustains us during our time away from the full grace of the sacraments.

Its purpose is to keep the fires of faith burning in our hearts, preparing us for the moment when we can return from our “exile” and embrace the fullness of the community Mass once again. We plan to send you a new *Spiritual Communion Service* each week while the pandemic continues.

Please also remember to continue your support of our parish, which still operates in numerous ways in dire circumstances (visiting the sick, responding to emergencies, etc.) Those of you familiar with online giving can click the button below to take you directly to the parish’s online giving portal, and hopefully others will remember to send or bring in their envelopes as they would normally do each Sunday.

On behalf of the clergy and staff of our parish, I want to assure you of our ongoing prayers and support for you and your family in this time of crisis. We will get through this and come together as a parish family once again around the table of the Lord!

With deepest respect,

Rev. _____

Pastor