

Saint Joseph CATHOLIC CHURCH

March 20, 2020

Friday of the Third Week of Lent

Dear Parishioners of St. Joseph Parish:

I hope this note finds you well! Please know that you very much remain in the prayers of our entire Parish Staff, especially in the Daily Masses offered by me and Father Kevin.

Having just celebrated our Patron's Feast yesterday, I was reminded by a parishioner that St. Joseph was the "patron of interruptions". How funny?! It seems that all our lives have been "interrupted" this week. As we look to our first weekend without public Masses, I want to encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity that we have for a live-streamed Mass on Sunday at 10am. If you have not yet subscribed to our YouTube channel, you may visit our website (www.sjohio.org) or use our app as both of these provide links to our live-streamed Mass. Our Masses are then archived for later viewing.

We'll be continuing live-streaming through our public cancellations, and are even considering continuation of this beyond these days, for the benefit of our homebound parishioners. Although nothing can replace the actual reception of our Eucharistic Lord, this is a time to remember that even as far back as the days of St. Thomas Aquinas, circumstances prevented all who desired to receive Jesus sacramentally from doing so, but they could still receive Him spiritually – anywhere and at any time – through a Spiritual Communion. While receiving Jesus sacramentally is most desired, we should not underestimate the gift of receiving Jesus spiritually. We have printed the prayer below in the bulletin and there are other versions, you may consider using this during the Communion Rite of any live-streamed Mass:

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself
wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

While we are watching a live-streamed Mass or going about our normal daily prayer routine, please be sure to continue to pray for all those affected by the COVID-19 virus. But also be sure and include the members of our government, safety forces, health care workers, grocery store employees, truckers, and all who, might be regularly overlooked, but in fact, are a necessary part of our daily life. Within our parish community, know that Father Kevin and I remain available for prayer, calls and emails, our parish homebound ministers will continue their visitations via phone, of our homebound parishioners, and know that our Parish Staff will continue to watch the latest developments with you and adjust as requested by both Church and civil authorities.

Keeping these in mind, here's what is going on at St. Joseph:

1. Our Parish 40-Hours Eucharistic Adoration Weekend has been cancelled; however, **Perpetual Adoration and Private Prayer will continue in our Eucharistic Chapel.** Our maintenance staff will appropriately clean the area throughout this time. Please be mindful of distance between adorers and limit the number of adorers to less than ten. **If you regularly attend Adoration and are sick or concerned about becoming sick, you need not worry about being present to cover your committed time slot.** It would be better to remain home and pray so that you might return later healthy.
2. Given the dwindling amount of activity, we will amend our Parish Office hours through April 14, it will be open from 9am-Noon on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Outside of these times, our staff will check their emails and voicemails remotely.
3. All 10am Sunday Masses, including Easter Sunday, will be live-streamed.
4. Father Kevin and I will privately celebrate Mass to fulfill the intention of any already-scheduled Masses during this time.
5. Daily live-streamed Masses are available from the Diocese of Cleveland at www.dioceseofcleveland.org. There will be no Stations of the Cross, nor Evening Prayer and Benediction until after Easter.
6. We continue to meet requests for anointing of those who are in the danger of death. Father Kevin and I are also available for Confession, you will simply need to arrange a time with us. Out of concern for assembling too many people together, we cannot schedule regular Confessions. Please keep in mind that since Confessions are not regularly available, you can follow what the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1451-1452) lays out and make an Act of Perfect Contrition to God: ask for His forgiveness, promise to sin no more, commit to amending your life, and resolve to attend Reconciliation when it's regularly-available again. Since we have been asked by legitimate authority to suspend these public functions, it is not a fault of your own that you cannot attend.
7. Bulletins will continue to be available each weekend online; through our website and our app. Some regularly received bulletins mailed to them and that will continue.
8. Since celebrations of Holy Week will be restricted, **we plan to live-stream Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.** Blessed Palms will be available at some point.

Holy Thursday will be celebrated together here with the priests of St. Joseph and St. John Neumann.

As many of you know, I love history and I teach it for our Diocesan Permanent Diaconate Formation Program. During the Spanish Flu outbreak of 1918, we had a similar shutdown during the episcopacy of Bishop Farrelly. None of us remember that experience nor know first-hand the struggle it caused, yet we do know that we overcame those days with Christ's help, as we will do so now. Please continue to look after one another, stay healthy, and pray for each other. These days are certainly shaping us, but do not have to define us – we have proven that over the past several months – I have faith that Jesus accompanies us in this and all our difficulties.

Please know that Father Kevin and I, and our entire Parish Staff, will be keeping you in our prayers as I hope that you will join me in praying for our community, region, and all who have been affected by COVID-19. I'll try not to write so much next time...

St. Joseph, pray for us!
~Fr. Joe