

Dear Parish Families,

The coronavirus global pandemic has had a dramatic impact on all of our lives. Not since the so-called Spanish Flu of 1918 have we seen the likes of what we are now experiencing. The closing of churches, schools, and many businesses, along with the call to practice social-distancing and to constantly wash our hands with soap and warm water has created fear, worry, and anxiety for many of us.

Earlier today I was out at St. Peter's and noticed the tattered American flag whipping in the wind. I thought to myself that is exactly how many people are feeling right now. Where do we find the hope we need at a time like this? The answer was found just below the flag where there is a statue of the crucifixion. The hope we need will only be found in our relationship with Jesus Christ. His love for us is so deep that He was willing to be crucified on a cross to show us the depth of love that He has for each and everyone of us. Knowing His love we are able to unite our suffering with His and in doing so focus on the joy that the Resurrection brings.

During these difficult and uncertain times all of us must unite ourselves more closely with Jesus. We can do this in a variety of ways:

- Recognize that the coronavirus is allowing us to experience a more intense Lent. It is stripping us from the things of this world and providing us with an opportunity to focus on what truly matters.
- Read the Sunday Mass readings for the day and then discuss as a family how the words can be applied to us. Feel free to use props!
- Set aside daily time for silence and family prayer even if you are planning to watch a televised Mass.
- Create a sacred space in your home by incorporating physical elements of prayer, such as lighting a candle and displaying a Bible. You can also bring out a picture of Jesus or a statue of the Blessed Mother or one of the saints.
- Pray together and then play together. Watch a movie, play a board game, bake cookies, or make a puzzle.
- Stay connected by reaching out to others by phone, email, or video chats, such as grandparents, neighbors, and friends.

This is an unprecedented time in the history of the Church and we need to make the best of it. All of us need to rediscover just how precious is the gift of time that God has given to us and utilize it to focus on what truly matters. Certainly there is a lot of darkness in the world and I like to remind myself that every time the Evil One thinks he is doing something to advance his own kingdom, he ultimately ends up advancing the Kingdom of God. Let's seize this opportunity and strengthen our bond with the Lord and one another.

Fr. Vince