



HOLY SPIRIT PARISH

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ!

My prayers are with you all—most especially during this troubling and difficult time in the United States and the world. Our Gospel reading for this weekend comes to us from John 11:1-45 and recalls the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. The story is filled with scenes of human frailty not unlike what some may be experiencing during these unprecedented times. There is doubt, confusion, misunderstanding, high emotions, mourning, and even fear for Jesus' safety as he returns to Judea, a place where some of the Jewish people sought to stone him during his previous visit there. Yet, the theme that rises above all of this and the message given to them and to us today is found in Christ. All of this human frailty—apparent in this Gospel passage, and familiar to our own lives will always be changed by faith and trust in Christ. This weekend's Gospel is not just about Lazarus's resurrection, it's about ours as well. Likewise, all of our human suffering, losses, frailties, and doubts are reimagined in light of our faith in Christ. This profound faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and as the Apostle Paul reminds us, that the Spirit lives and remains within us. With him, we can overcome anything. In the story of the raising of Lazarus, we eventually find the tomb of Lazarus is empty—because hearts are full. May we keep our hearts full of Christ as well in the weeks and months that lie ahead.

Although Masses are cancelled for the weekend I encourage you to find time to view the live stream Masses offered by the Archbishop found on our web site—or you can watch Mass on EWTN [offered on Sundays at 7:00 am, 11:00 am, and 6:00 pm (and weekdays typically at 7:00 am and 11:00 pm.)] And while it lacks the true essence of the Eucharist that we have come to rely on in the celebration of the Mass, we remain in communion with the whole Church in our prayers with her. Likewise, you may consider offering additional prayers (rosary, divine chaplet, Stations of the Cross, etc.).

Additionally, you may consider offering a prayer for spiritual communion in the Eucharist. Pope Francis, after reciting a livestreamed Angelus prayer March 15, said, "United to Christ we are never alone, but instead form one body, of which he is the head. It is a union that is nourished with prayer and also with spiritual communion in the Eucharist, a practice that is recommended when it isn't possible to receive the sacrament."

A popular spiritual communion prayer is one that was given to us by St. Alphonsus Liguori in the 1700's, "Jesus, I believe you are really here in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you more than anything in the world, and I hunger to receive you. But since I cannot receive Communion at this

moment, feed my soul at least spiritually. I unite myself to you now as I do when I actually receive you."

And finally, please know that while the church sites remained closed, I will continue to offer the sacrament of reconciliation to those who wish to receive it by appointment. Simply call me on my cell phone (563-542-5038) and we can arrange for a time and location to meet.

Again, please know of my prayers for all of you. I ask that you pray for me and the parish as well.

In Christ,

Fr. Steve Garner