

March 26, 2020

Dear Saint Leo family,

As we navigate the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19, I recognize that your spiritual well being and nourishment are extraordinarily important. My primary role is to provide for the pastoral needs of you, our parish family. I am writing to inform you of how your parish staff and I are working to meet your needs.

Our parish office is closed but most staff members are working from home. This is going quite well as we are blessed with a dedicated and conscientious staff. Our ability to assist our parish family remains unchanged and our access to the tools and software needed to assist you remains the same.

Calls are being redirected to our receptionist at home and forwarded to staff during regular office hours. In case of a sacramental emergency, please follow the prompt for the Emergency Number. Father Felix will make every effort to provide Anointing of the Sick to those in extreme illness

Mail is being sorted through/distributed daily. We are following the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines related to social interactions, frequent facility cleaning and hygiene.

Our beautiful church is open during the day for private prayer and is cleaned/sanitized every evening. Please make use of the hand sanitizer in the back of the church before and after your visit.

Bishop Jugis has closed all diocesan schools through May 15, 2020. Mr. Gary Callus transitioned his staff immediately to online instruction for students. Mrs. Lauren Garner has transitioned all Faith Formation families to online instruction.

Bishop Jugis has also waived the obligation of the faithful to attend Sunday Mass until further notice. However, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the numerous live stream opportunities as a family. (See our bulletin, website and Facebook page for details.) All baptisms, weddings and funerals are postponed until the restrictions on

group numbers, as issued by the CDC, have been either eliminated or adjusted. The Sacrament of Reconciliation cannot be offered at this time. During his March 20th Mass, Our Holy Father reminded us that when we find ourselves with “the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution,” we can make an act of contrition directly to God in prayer, until such time as it is possible to avail ourselves of sacramental confession.

“Do what the Catechism (of the Catholic Church) says. It is very clear: If you cannot find a priest to confess to, speak directly with God, your father, and tell him the truth. Say ‘Lord, I did this, this, this. Forgive me,’ and ask for pardon with all your heart.” Make an act of contrition, the pope said, and promise God, ‘I will go to confession afterward, but forgive me now.’ “And immediately you will return to a state of grace.”

Social Media is allowing us to stay connected in numerous ways. I invite you to follow us on Facebook and/or visit our website for daily updates and opportunities to stay connected. Along with our bulletin, we’re posting links to a variety of spiritual and faith - based educational resources. If you do not have internet access, we still want you to feel part of your parish family. Please call our main office number and we will work to keep you connected via mailings, etc.

Let us pray and support one another while remembering the most vulnerable among us. Let us pray for the repose of those who have died, for the recovery of those who are ill, for the strength and protection of healthcare workers and caregivers and for an end to the COVID-19 health crisis. Let us support our elderly, sick and homebound parishioners. During this Lenten season, I ask you to embrace the corporal works of mercy and to practice a spirit of gratitude and generosity towards others.

Finally, while we continue our good work on your behalf, I ask you to please keep in mind our dependency on your weekly financial offering. You have always been a parish of great generosity during extraordinary times and in meeting the needs of the poor and the vulnerable. While a shortfall in our collections for a week or two might be absorbed, the ongoing loss of revenue will affect our ability to carry out the ministries of the Church and maintain our parish facilities and services. Please either mail in your envelopes or use this time to transition to online giving using this link: www.stleocatholic.org.

Please know that I carry you and yours in my heart and in my prayers.

May God be with you.

Reverend Brian J. Cook
Pastor