



# SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH

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My dear parishioners of Ss. Teresa and Thomas,

In light of all that is resulting from the spread of the coronavirus, there are several local, parish restrictions that will be effective as of your receipt of this letter.

The first is that despite the designation of 'lockdown,' the church buildings will remain open during the day, perhaps with yet to be limited hours, for time of private devotion and prayer.

- The monthly Eucharistic Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will continue as scheduled, although those in attendance should attempt to pray one at a time, or if more than one person is present, keep the standard social distance that is currently in place.

The second is in regards to financial concerns. Of course, collection envelopes are still being welcomed and received on a weekly basis. But without Mass, we are asking if you would bring your envelopes to the parish office during regular business hours (Corry, Mon-Thurs, 8-3/Union City, 9-2) or mail them to St. Thomas at 203 West Washington Street here in Corry or to St. Teresa at 9 Third Avenue in Union City.

- Of course, pledges and payments toward the Catholic Services Appeal are also still being accepted and appreciated, and could be dropped by or sent in the same way.

In regards to the limits of 'lockdown,' all major (defined as groups of more than 10) parish affiliated meetings are not to occur on parish grounds without the express knowledge and permission of the pastor. This includes such events as, but is not limited to, all council and board meetings; all Religious Education and their affiliated events: retreats, practices, sacraments, etc.; Stations of the Cross, Bible studies, special Lenten events including the Lenten Fish Frys, First Friday and home visits, Palm Sunday/Holy Week/Easter Masses and services; etc.

- All minor (defined as 10 or less) parish affiliated meetings are permitted to continue, as long as the members are in agreement and comfortable with them, and the pastor is informed, and these would include but is not limited to: confessions on Saturdays or privately; the RCIA retreat on April 4; the already scheduled Confirmation interviews and letters to the Bishop on April 5; et al. The Sacrament of First Holy Communion, along with all its preparations and requirements, practices, and retreats, remains in place for the time being. Private events scheduled at the St. Elizabeth Parish Center will remain as scheduled, unless the private citizens choose to cancel, and as long as there is no responsibility and/or liability to the parish. Parish events at the said Center are to be discontinued.

Of course, because the situation changes daily and rapidly, some or all of these directives are subject to amendment or change. If they can be lifted earlier than planned, you will be notified. But as of now, let's set the date of April 12 to re-evaluate, unless something comes from the Bishop and the diocesan offices in the interim. Hopefully, that will be the case: that the health of our world improves and our lives will resume and return to some degree of order and normality. Until then, call if you have any questions – please direct your questions to me, and me alone – please feel free to call me through the parish office but do not burden the office staff with questions that they might not be able to answer – and I will attempt to respond as best I can, knowing too that some answers might be not readily or instantly available. And of course, take advantage of our opened churches for prayer . . . that will be as beneficial to the overall solution as much as any scientific progress.

God bless . . .

Cc: Attachment re: March 17, letter from Bishop Persico