

Dear Parish Family,

By now many of you have seen Bishop Baker's latest letter referencing the actions he is taking in the Diocese to combat the spread of the coronavirus. In order to comply with the Bishop's instructions, Sacred Heart Church will implement the following:

- **There will be no public celebration of the Holy Mass until the day before Palm Sunday, 4 April 2020.**
- Please note the Bishop's instructions on the obligations of the Faithful. His letter states:
 - "The faithful are encouraged to remember the moral obligation to keep the Sabbath holy that remains, even when attending Mass is impossible. This may be done by watching a Mass on television or online, meditating on the readings, saying other prayers and devotions, and so forth - including the laudable practice of making a Spiritual Communion. It is up to each individual and family to determine to keep Sundays holy.
- After much prayer and consultations with ministers in other parishes, and after rereading the Bishop's letter several times, **I AM SUSPENDING ALL PARISH MASSES IMMEDIATELY**. I am not taking this step lightly. The driving factor was that the coronavirus is very contagious and the more people are in a given space, the more likely the infection can spread if someone in the Church has the virus. Additionally, word has gotten out that private Masses were being celebrated in the Church, and too many inquiries were being made about the times, which indicates that more and more people would try to attend one of these Masses.
- I am truly dishearten for having to take this step, but given the potential for spreading this virus by having more than 25 people at a Mass is not only not in compliance with the Bishop's guidance, but those attending are at too much of a risk for being infected with this disease.
- I also pray that by having to suspend these Masses, all of us would begin to understand the unbelievable gift Eucharist is to our Church, and by His absence these next few weeks we would develop a deep longing for our Eucharistic Lord. And, as it is Lent let us offer up our suffering to the Lord for being unable to receive Him in Communion, and offer this suffering that all fallen away Catholics would come to their senses and return to the very source of Life - the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

- In lieu of no Masses at Sacred Heart and in order to assist the faithful to make a spiritual communion, **we will live stream via our Facebook page and Parish web site two Masses. I will celebrate a Mass on Sunday at 9:30am. Fr. Raul will celebrate a Mass on Sunday at 12 Noon in Spanish.**
- You can also watch Mass every day via two web sites. Bishop Barron will stream his Mass at 7:15am, and EWTN streams their daily Mass four times a day, at 7:00am, 11:00am, 6:00pm and 11:00pm. On Sundays, they stream the Mass at 7:00am, 11:00am and 11:00pm.
- **The Church will be open Monday - Friday from 8:00am - 12 Midnight for those who want to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament.** Additionally, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed daily from 7:00am until 12 Midnight, so that those who regularly adore at a certain time may continue to do so. The Church will be open from 8:00am - 7:00pm on Saturdays with Eucharistic Adoration from 8:00am - 5:00pm, and from 8:00am - 5:00pm on Sunday, with Adoration from 1:00pm - 5:00pm.
- Contrary to my initial statement and to comport to the Bishop's letter, all Parish devotions and activities, classes and meetings are suspended until further notice. This includes:
 - Sacred Heart School
 - Parish School of Religion
 - St. Vincent DePaul
 - All Choir activities, to include both practice and performances
 - The Friday Rosary at Noon
 - All Bible studies
 - Our Apologetic class
 - Book Club
 - Sunday Adult Catechesis
- Additionally, all Hispanic devotions and activities to include Baptism and Wedding preparation, Quinceneras, etc. are suspended until further notice.
- Please see the Bishop's letter for guidance on weddings and funerals during this period of suspensions.
- The Family Life Center and Gym will be closed until further notice. There is one exception. The Neo Catechumenal Way (NCW) will continue to meet in the Conference Room of the FLC. I am doing this because the NCW team is only here for the next six weeks and they need to present as much of their program as possible.

- Confessions will be heard on Wed from Noon - 1:00pm and from 6:15 - 7:15pm; Thur and Fri from Noon - 1:00pm; and, Sat from 3:00pm - 4:30pm (or until 5:15pm if necessary). Confessions will be heard in the Adoration Chapel. Fr. Patrick will be sitting in a chair and penitents are asked to sit across the aisle from him.
- Although the Legion of Mary has been prohibited from visiting all Nursing Homes and, for the most part, CRMC, they can still visit the home-bound if requested. If you desire that the Legion of Mary bring communion to your loved one, please contact either Teresita Martinez at 1+567-762-6716 or the Parish Office at 256-734-3730. Please remember, if your loved one is very sick or susceptible to catching diseases from others, please be very sure you can provide a safe environment for both your loved one and the Legion of Mary volunteer. If not, or the person being visited is too sick, just call the Office and request prayers for this person.
- I will continue to visit the sick and administer the Sacrament of the Sick as requested or needed. To date, I still think I can get into all local nursing homes and CRMC. I will also visit the home-bound as time permits or as needed. For a visit by me, please call the Parish Office to set up a time and date. If there is an emergency, you can call my cell number at 256-338-1668. I will respond as quickly as I can.
- **The Parish Office will remain open on Monday through Thursday from 8:00am - 3:00pm. The Office will be closed on Friday.**
- Over my time as Pastor of Sacred Heart, I have been repeatedly humbled by your generosity to the Parish, be it the regular collection or a special project. This has been especially true the last three months. Yet, we all know that as this coronavirus pandemic continues, there will be less money donated to the Church. That said, I beseech you to continue to a make your weekly donation to the Church. Like you, we count on the weekly collection to pay our bills, keep the lights on, heating/AC running and the myriad of other things it takes to run our Parish. I know many of you will be strapped because of reduction in work hours, layoff's or loss of jobs, but your gift will help us continue to accomplish our mission: to take care of our Parish Family and spread the Kingdom of God here in Cullman. And now this is more urgent than ever as we strive to present the face of Jesus to all we meet, especially those most in need of our help and prayers.
- You can make your donation in one of three ways

- Drop your envelop/donation off at the Church Office at 205 3rd Ave SE, Cullman, AL 35055
- Mail your donation to the address above
- Make a direct deposit on-line giving. Instructions on how to do this are one our Sacred Heart webpage or you can call Jean Brooks, our Business Manager, at 256-736-5403.

As you know, this current situation is incredibly fluid, with changes coming almost hourly, so we will do our best to inform you about any and all Parish news or actions as soon as possible.

May God bless you and your family. Through the intercession of St. Corona, Patron Saint of Pandemics, and all the angles and saints, may God protect you from this disease, bring you closer to Him and shower you and your family with His Grace - God's life within in us. Please know that you are in my daily prayers.

Fr. Patrick, O.S.B.
Pastor