

March 18, 2020

My dear friends,

You have perhaps heard by now that in order to curb the spread of the coronavirus, the bishops of Ohio have decided, effective immediately, to suspend temporarily all publicly celebrated Masses/liturgies, at least through the celebrations of Holy Week and Easter. The bishops of Ohio dispense the Catholic faithful in Ohio from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass through Easter Sunday. **Funeral Masses are still allowed at this time, though attendance would have to be very limited.**

As your pastor, I write this letter to you so that you may be informed on how our parish of Assumption will be adapting to this current reality, the sacrifices that we will have to make together, as well as how we can still maintain our parish family bonds and communication, and to give you encouragement.

Along with the suspension of weekend and daily Masses, I am announcing the suspension of Adoration and Stations of the Cross. **Only Confession will remain as scheduled**, Saturdays from 3:30-4pm, and Wednesdays 5:30-6:30pm during the remainder of Lent. You may still call me to schedule an appointment for the sacrament. Please avoid serious sins. **Mass intentions for the upcoming weeks will still be offered, albeit privately.**

With regards to **financial matters**, all expenses are being cut as much as possible, although the parish must still maintain a level of utilities usage, as well as some salary payments for employees. Thus, although no one will be showing up for Mass, a level of income and donations is still needed. I know that some of you have been impacted financially due to the virus, and understand if you are temporarily unable to contribute. But if you are able, your continued donations are greatly appreciated. For my part, I will be donating my entire paycheck back to parish to reduce expenses throughout this period. Envelopes can be dropped off at the office or mailed. Online giving can be setup through our parish website or parish app.

The Church itself will be open for people to come and pray. The side door will be open during the regular office hours during the weekday, 9am-3pm. The side door will also be open during the weekend, Saturday 9am-4pm and Sunday 9am-1pm.

The Parish Office will remain open at the normal hours, unless told otherwise. The bulletin will still be available online at our parish website.

I will still be writing homilies for Sunday, which will be made available online at the parish website. Along with my homilies, I will be making updates and teaching lessons throughout this time for your benefit, so that you may still be spiritually fed, and still feel connected to the parish. At times, I may ask others to write about their own experiences during this special Lent.

If someone is in need of Anointing of the Sick or last rites, I will go to them.

If someone would like a personal visit, either individually or with family, please call the parish to make arrangements. If a visit is not possible, I am more than happy to simply converse with you.

This is still the season of Lent, and therefore it is a time of repentance and opportunity. This is a sacrifice that has been imposed upon us, but sacrifice always allows for growth in the right areas. Use this time to increase your prayer, your scripture and spiritual reading. Offer up your fasting and other sacrifices for those who need it. Make regular calls to other family and loved ones, especially if they or you are alone. Don't be afraid to make supply trips and run errands for those who may be especially vulnerable, specifically the elderly and sick who cannot leave their home. Continue to pray for all and yourselves.

Sunday is still the Lord's Day, so be sure to spend some time in prayer and devotion to God, especially as a family if you can. Mass can be watched online or television. Read the Scripture readings. Though you may be away from Holy Communion, make a spiritual communion, asking Jesus to always dwell in your heart. Don't forget the great treasury of prayers at your disposal, such as rosaries, novenas, liturgy of the hours, etc.

Further mass communication will be available only at the parish website, the parish Facebook page, and the parish app. If you have never used these sites, now is the time to do so. Please remember that the office will remain open, unless told otherwise.

Please check these sites daily for any new communication and updates.

Personally speaking, the very idea of not being able to celebrate the Holy Week and Easter liturgies is difficult to process, but it is something that you and I must accept. I have always liked to joke how the priest has the ultimate job security, but now I find myself, in a sense, out of a job. I am frustrated and sadden by these events, not just for me, but for all those affected by the virus itself, or those whose lives and livelihood have been disrupted by the social distancing and shutdowns. But I remain in faith and hope and love. I believe that God always can bring about a greater good through trial and sacrifice, and even loss. It was through the sacrifice of God's beloved Son, Jesus Christ, that we are able to experience His loving mercy and forgiveness of sins, and it is through Jesus' glorious resurrection that we hope in our own glorious resurrection of the dead, of joyous life eternal. I look forward to the day, and pray that it may be soon, where we can worship God again as a full community, bringing God our joyous worship and thanksgiving. May we always turn to Mary, our Blessed Mother gloriously assumed into heaven, for her continued intercession and support.

Your Pastor,

- Fr. Daniel Finnerty

Parish Website: assumptionchurchoh.org

Parish Facebook: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Geneva, Ohio

Parish App: To download: iPhone users text: ParishApp1 to 555888

Android users text: ParishApp2 to 555888