

Dear Parishioners,

March 18, 2020

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High and abides in the shade of the Almighty says to the Lord: “My refuge, my stronghold, my God in whom I trust” (Psalm 90).

The Psalms are filled with expressions of distress and suffering, but also of the faithful and protecting hand of God in the midst of trials and suffering. In this is a difficult time for all of us, I ask you to keep close to Christ who is our strength and our salvation. Our faith is a gift from God which gives us hope so that no matter how dire things may be, we know that God will not abandon us or stop protecting us. That protection may be physical by protecting our bodies, our families, our property, or our nation; it may be protection over our minds and hearts so that we can bear great suffering without being broken by it; it may be moral or spiritual protection so that we do not fall into despair or abandon God in our hearts or our actions. It is important to know that God is with us, and He wishes to be our refuge and our stronghold. In this time of emergency, there are a great many priorities that have to be considered, but Christ is a hidden presence who will make a profound difference to us who turn to Him. I am deeply convinced of this – I have experienced this in my own life, and I know that many of you have too, and we will experience His presence in the weeks ahead.

The news that public Masses have been cancelled would seem to deprive us of the presence of Jesus. It was indeed a very difficult decision for Bishop DeGrood to make – one of his first as our Bishop. It was not made lightly; it was made to help in the effort to curtail the spread of the virus and protect our communities as much as possible. However, I want to assure you that the church will remain open for you to visit and pray; and we will do whatever we can to provide the sacraments, support you in prayer, remind you of God’s presence, and assist those who are in need or in isolation in our parish and community. We will continue to publish the Parish Bulletin (it will be a smaller collectible edition!!!), which will be our principal means of communication with you. Over the coming weeks we will inform you of additional things that we will do to respond to your spiritual needs as well as any initiatives to help in more practical ways. In the meantime, I would like to list what the parish will do in the coming weeks:

- The church will be open every day for prayer from 7:00am to 9:00pm.
- Adoration will continue every Thursday evening from 6:00pm to 9:00pm. We will try to have another evening of adoration each Tuesday night during this time. If you would like to assist please let us know.
- We will have a book of prayer intentions before the altar for you to write your special intentions for this time of emergency. I will review them each evening to bear in mind before each Mass.
- Please continue to use the Prayer Chain so that all parishioners can uphold you in their prayers and reach out to you too.
- I will be available for confessions throughout this time. In times of crisis like this, one of the most important ways to ease anxiety is to make sure our soul is right with God. This is what a good confession does. I strongly urge you to seek confession. I will be able to hear confessions behind a screen but not face-to-face. The times for confessions are:

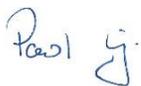
- Tuesday: 6:00pm – 8:00pm
 - Thursday: 6:00pm – 8:00pm
 - Saturday: 3:00pm – 5:00pm
 - If you are in quarantine or isolation and wish to go to confession, please let me know. I can hear your confession at the door of your house, as long as there is a solid barrier between us.
- I will say Mass in private throughout this time. I may be able to offer a very small group the opportunity to be present at some of the private Masses in the church. If you are interested, please let us know. The intentions of the private Masses will be those of the Parish.
 - I will say Sunday Masses at the normal times but in private. The church bell will be rung at the time of the consecration so that we are reminded that Jesus has come among us. It can be a time for us to pause and bring our petitions to Jesus. We will let you know if we can stream the Sunday Mass on our Facebook page.
 - Starting on Saturday we will ring the church bell for the Angelus at 6:00pm. The bells of the Angelus are a call to prayer. The Angelus is a very beautiful prayer that tells us, “And the Word became flesh.” It is telling us, perhaps in the midst of isolation or anxiety, that God has come among us – He is with me now.
 - You can still access Formed for Catholic videos, eBooks, and audiobooks. The parish code for Formed is in the bulletin and on our webpage. Our library will still be available in the foyer.
 - Zach has written an article to outline what we will strive to do to work with families in their home lessons and with our teenage parishioners. We will be providing the planned resources for this month’s Family Formation home lessons.
 - We will publish the bulletin online and via the My Parish app. We will have some copies available in the foyer. If you wish to receive the bulletin by mail, please call us at the office.
 - If you wish to continue to support the financial upkeep of the parish, you may consider using the We Share online giving program. You can also support us by mailing your envelope each week.

In the next weeks we will try to provide means to support one another in practical ways. In the meantime, if you need to talk with me, please call. If I am not at the office, just leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

This strange time will be difficult but will bring unexpected blessings. Perhaps it will bring your family closer together, and know and love each other in unexpected, surprising and enriching ways; perhaps people will discover how boring and hollow the world of the phone is, so that they will rediscover how to communicate and that there are other things beyond the screen; perhaps it will help you to find new interests or provide opportunities to do what you did not have time for before due to very busy lives. I hope that it will bring us together to a degree that our diverse and inclusive world has failed to manage.

Let us, each day, uphold each other in prayer. Prayer will enrich our compassion for each other, and open our hearts to treat one another with the goodness and virtue that Jesus showed us in His time among us. Let our prayer be that of the young faithful Jew, Azariah, who prayed from the heart of the fire: “Deliver us by your wonders, and bring glory to your name, O Lord.”

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Fr. Paul King

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