

Dear Friends,

I have started to write this letter to all of you for three days in an attempt to fill you in on important developments of church life in the wake of the evolving pandemic. However, as all of you are aware, our reality seems to change minute by minute, and anything I write in the morning is obsolete by the afternoon. I have little doubt that this letter will be a bit dated by the time it is in your hands, but here is where we stand as of Thursday afternoon, March 19th.

First and foremost, please know of my prayers for all of you. I already feel the loss of not being able to gather with you in prayer and for many of you the prospect of not receiving the Eucharist, because of the moratorium on celebrating public Mass, must be equally painful. With that said, know that Fr. Martin and I have been celebrating Mass daily for your sake. I'm grateful that I am not doing this alone, because the prospect of a private Mass apart from others, has always been hard for me to reconcile with my understanding of the communal nature of the Eucharistic Celebration. Yet, yesterday, I had a profound awareness of the angels and saints present during our prayer, though the pews were empty. I also had the sense that we, too, though scattered around the city, were in some grace filled way were united in Spirit. That gives me great comfort.

Regarding Masses... Fr. Martin and I are offering private Mass daily and those who have scheduled Mass Intentions for loved ones can rest assured that these intentions are being fulfilled primarily on the day requested and scheduled.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to make calls on Nursing Homes and Hospitals. In general, a pastoral visit from Fr. Martin or me will not be likely unless the situation is an end of life event. For the protection of our home bound and their assigned Eucharistic Minister, we have suspended weekly visits. We are however, committed to remain in contact and intentional about prayer for our home bound.

Though we are not permitted to have group gatherings or public Mass, please know that you can access the main Church worship space weekdays from 8 am until 5 pm. You may enter from the North or East Atrium door (handicapped). We are making use of the larger Church worship space so that people seeking to make a visit and pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament may have adequate room for social distancing.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered in Church on Tuesday afternoons from 4 pm to 5 pm; and again on Saturday afternoon from 3 pm to 4 pm. Also in an effort to be present to our people, Fr. Martin and I will be available in the new parish Atrium for pastoral counsel, prayer, Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The schedule is as follows:

Monday:	10 am – Noon	Fr. Bernie
Tuesday:	1 pm – 3 pm	Fr. Martin
Wednesday:	1 pm – 3 pm	Fr. Bernie, 5 pm – 8 pm Fr. Martin
Thursday:	10 am – Noon	Fr. Martin
Friday:	10 am – Noon	Fr. Martin
Sunday:	10 am – Noon	Fr. Bernie & Fr. Martin

The parish staff has been working to establish ways for ongoing communication with our parishioners. Information that we share weekly in the bulletin reaches only half of our people. We are also seeking to provide new resources to enhance your spiritual journey outside of the traditional means we had available to us. One new initiative we will be implementing for communications is a resource made available by Bishop Robert Barron's group called "Flocknote". For those who have provided their mobile phone number or current e-mail address, we will be able to provide daily updates to our parishioners (to update your mobile phone number and e-mail address, please contact the Parish Office at 812-477-8923, cjohnson@evdio.org, or noskins@evdio.org). If you have not yet done so, you are encouraged to download our Parish App. Also, Holy Rosary maintains a Facebook presence that you can like. Our school families are already receiving periodic update through "School Messenger". Below, please note a number of internet links that can connect you with daily streaming of Mass and other prayer resources.

Bishop Robert Barron: <https://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass/>

St. Benedict Cathedral: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/saintbenedictcathedral/videos/>

Archbishop Paul Etienne: <https://www.facebook.com/ArchdioceseofSeattle/>

At this time, we still intend to keep the Parish Office open under normal business hours. That said, I have asked the parish staff to take advantage of working from home as much as possible to reduce their risk of exposure to the Corona Virus. You could help all of us as well by avoiding unnecessary visits to the Parish Office. Business we can conduct through internet or by phone helps protect the whole community.

This past Monday, while talking to dad on the phone, he questioned what to do about his weekly tithe to the parish. He customarily places his envelope in the collection each week and was not interested in signing up for automatic withdraw from his bank account. He finally decided to send a check to his parish in an amount that covered his tithe for two months. That way he didn't have to go to the trouble of sending a check each week.... Please do not underestimate the importance of your continued support of our parish mission and ministry.

I encourage all of you to read the all household mailing of the diocesan weekly news, "The Message". There is a special section that shares information about the practice of Spiritual Communion and a prayer to help enter into this blessed encounter with the Lord. As we are fasting from the reception of Sacramental Communion, it's not necessary to refrain from Spiritual Communion with the Lord.

Finally, just a word of encouragement. The social distancing that is being called for by the CDC does not have to equate to social isolation. Through technology, ample opportunities are available to be in contact with one another. Let's take care of our neighbors and one another. Let's continue to anticipate the needs of one another. Small, kind gestures can go a long way in this time of growing crisis. Most importantly, let us pray for one another and be renewed in the hope that the Lord will bring us through this moment by his abounding love.

May the Lord bless and keep you, Fr. Bernie