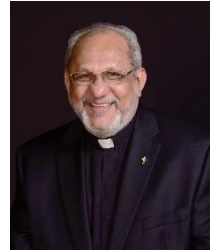


Fr. Tom Manjaly, SAC

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August 2020

My Dear People of God,

The past few months, since the coronavirus was first detected, have been unusually cataclysmic. Our current situation is stretching us all. These are days of abnormal fear, panic, anxiety and hopelessness with towering ramifications on human health, financial security, social life and future goals. Fear, loneliness and stress have become companions in our homes. When social and spiritual interactions are thwarted, not by choice but by circumstances beyond our control, we are forced to adjust. Consequently, parish life in these times of the COVID-19 pandemic has changed for all of us. During this time, we have felt the loss of spiritual communion with our brothers and sisters, especially in the Holy week celebration.

In moments such as these, what can help us to live in hope is to find positive aspects of the situation. All of us have a lot more time to be with ourselves, our family members and with God. We realized the preciousness of many things we took for granted. We felt the longing for the community celebration of faith. Thank God we have been able, although with restrictions, to reopen our church and celebrate the Holy Mass. Our reopening of church was done with all the care necessary. Thank you to the pastoral council and to all the volunteers for their meticulous planning and execution. I appreciate all parishioners and the visitors to our parish for your cooperation. Your good will is amazing. We shall continue to follow all the directives in order to make our coming to worship safe and secure. Let me also remind you that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is dispensed through Sunday, September 6.

This is the time we all need prayers. I promise that you all are upper most in my prayers and in the daily celebration of the holy Mass. I pray especially for the home bound, those undergoing various treatments, those who have lost their jobs and those who are living in fear and anxiety. Let's thank God that no one from our parish has been a victim of Covid-19 so far (at least not that I know). I also request your prayers for me to stand strong in these times of uncertainty. I thank all of you who joined me in praying during this period of crisis through Rosary (zoom), silent hour of prayer and Eucharistic Adoration.

Upcoming events:

1. First Communion and Confirmation

This year we have twelve children who were to receive their First Communion in the Month of May. We were forced to postpone it due to the Pandemic. We have decided to have the First Communion celebrations in three groups on three different Sundays, in order to avoid overcrowding in the church (July 12, August 9 and September 20). We are planning to have the confirmation celebration in our parish on October 25, if circumstances permit. Congratulations to all.

2. Sunday Religious Education for the Year 2020-21

We are unable to say with certainty what will be our modus operandi. However we are planning for both: online and 'face to face' classes for our children. As usual we will begin in the month of September. Parents can now enroll your children by calling our DRE (Jan Grosschadl) in the parish office.

3. New Electronic Sign at the West Site

This has been a long desired project by many parishioners, but it had to wait due to a lack of funds. We are happy and grateful to one of our generous parishioners who promised the major portion of the total cost. This has prompted us to move forward with this project. However, we are still a bit short of the total cost. Thank you to all of the other contributors whose generosity is highly appreciated. If anyone else is able to contribute a small amount, to help close the gap, it would be greatly appreciated. This project will certainly enhance the presence of our school and church making them more visible to all.

4. New Pastoral Council and Trustee

We have completed the process of nomination and election by discernment of the pastoral council and the trustee according to the Bylaws of the Archdiocese. As I thank the outgoing council members for their selfless service to the parish, I would like to wish the trustee and the members of the new pastoral council a fruitful term of service. God bless your willingness to take up this important responsibility.

5. Parish Picnic

This is an event we all look forward to every year. Unfortunately we had to postpone it from June 7 to September 13. However since our environment is still not conducive enough for such social gatherings, we have decided to call it off for this year. Stay tuned for more details.

6. School Reopening

Our school, like every other, was shut down in March due to the Pandemic but was engaged with the online classes for the duration of the semester. Now it's time to plan the reopening for the year 2020-21. We are planning with diligence as to how we can safely reopen our school if we have the official permission. Enrolling of students is in progress. I would like to congratulate all our eighth graders on their graduation. I thank the principal, staff and faculty, especially Laura, our food service director for their great service during these difficult times.

Word of thanks are due to all of you for standing together during this ongoing crisis as a faith community. I would like to thank the trustees, all the committees and commissions who are holding their zoom meetings regularly to plan and execute various activities in the parish. I thank parish staff for holding the fort during these difficult times. A special word of gratitude to all of you for your generous financial support without which we could not manage the increasing expenses of maintenance. I hope and pray that you will continue to remain generous with your financial contributions.

We are living in the most uncertain of times, we do not know what tomorrow will bring, but if we trust in God with whom nothing is impossible, we will overcome this crisis with courage and hope. As scripture says "... if God is with us who can be against us..." I wish you all a great summer vacation. Stay connected through our parish website and the weekly bulletins wherever you are. Stay safe and healthy.

God bless you,

Fr. Manjaly

Fr. Thomas Manjaly, SAC
Pastor

