

Dear Brothers and Sisters of St Patrick Catholic Church in Glen Cove,

GOING VIRAL

What strange times we are living in! An example of such strangeness is that as I type this, I have no idea what the world will look like by the time you receive and read this. Only time will tell how long these unprecedented actions being taken to help stem the tide will last, but we should all pray for an expeditious end. In the meantime, we are in uncharted territory, especially with the cancelation of Mass and all other Church activities all the way through Easter. At precisely the same time we need our Faith more than ever (although good times or ill, we always need our Faith), there are no public celebrations of any kind. I'm sure it's as surreal to many of you as it is to priests who set our lives by the rhythm of the sacraments. That being said...

THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST LIVES ON

The absence of Mass affects everyone, and not just daily or weekly Mass goers. For many of those who rarely go to Mass, nothing might seem different. But even for those who do not regularly come, this might now be precisely the time when one most desires the consolation Faith provides in such turbulent times (life is of course always turbulent, but the turbulence de Jour is particularly acute.)

In any event, this is an opportunity to remember the supernatural character of our Church. Whenever and wherever the Mass is said, the priest is offering the Sacrifice of Calvary to God on behalf of all His people, present or not. This in no way is meant to downplay the importance of fulfilling one's weekly obligation, but just that when one cannot come for legitimate reasons (sickness, travel, pandemic, etc), the Mass is still being offered. The priest is doing this privately, but the grace that is produced by it is not affected by a closed door or a quarantine. It is real, active, and it permeates the world for the salvation of souls, and this is still being done by Fr Daniel, Fr Elias, Fr Leonard and me each and every day. I simply wanted to assure you of this. Speaking of which...

LIVE-STEAMING DAILY MASS

While no substitute for physical attendance at Mass, for those who want to stay connected to this mystery, we have recently begun to live-stream a daily Mass from the Canons' private chapel at 8:30 am. We'll do this until we get back to normal. This Mass can be found live, and throughout the day here on Glen Cove Catholic's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/GlenCoveCatholic/>.

WHEN WILL 'NORMAL' RETURN ?

I wish I knew the answer to this question. We all want to return to this as soon as possible. Despite the ever-changing circumstances, what seems stable at this point is that there are no public celebrations of the Mass or any other sacrament until at least April 14th. This means, among other things, no public celebration of Easter on April 12th. How bizarre!

All I can say is that since the situation often changes, the best thing I can tell you to do is check www.glencovecatholic.org and <https://www.facebook.com/StPatrickGlenCove/> fairly often for any updates. It seems as soon as we publish something, another thing often changes! I do update the site as soon as I receive new info.

We have also made great use of our **Flocknote** (text messaging) service during this time to keep people apprised of critical announcements. If you have not yet signed up, I would ask that you strongly consider doing so. It is the absolute best way I can get critical information out to you promptly. Just text "**gccatholic**" to **84567** to get started!

MINI-EASTER?

At the risk of putting in print something that may soon be obsolete, I want to say that IF this lockdown doesn't extend past April 14th, we intend to make a big deal of Mass on April 19th. Since Easter is celebrated as an octave, April 19th will indeed still be Easter! IF (and I stress the 'if') lockdown ends by then, I think we should all make as big of a deal about it as we can. Please stay tuned via the above online platforms.

A FAVOR TO ASK

As something of a news and politics junkie, I have been following this news story quite closely. One of the areas that I find that has been largely underreported is a rational discussion about whether or not our efforts to slow the virus' spread is worth the cost. We naturally all want to "beat" this thing, minimize the death toll, and do what is necessary for this, but the extraordinary lockdown measures being implemented (again, as I type) are already having a negative effect on the economy. The nation's economy, and indeed the economy of the entire world, is being challenged like never before. People are working less or not working at all and businesses, especially smaller ones, are being hurt by the shutdowns. Although time will tell if all this is necessary, it is not crazy to ask: Could the cure ultimately be worse than the disease? After all, arguably more people could suffer and die in the long run if the world economy collapses.

In any event, what we know now is that individuals and businesses are being stressed. It is just the same in the Church. Indeed, most parishes (ours included) depend utterly on the income received during the weekly collection. **Without our normal Mass schedule, the income crucial for the running of St Patrick is taking a massive hit.** Thankfully, we do have about 22% of our giving come through our online WeShare service. While some folks came by the church on the weekend of March 21-22 and dropped of their offering, we ultimately received less than 1/3 of our normal collection. Since our expenses largely remain the same whether there is Mass or not, this is a significant hit.

I fully understand that if this lockdown has affected you financially, you may not at this time may be able to give to St Patrick, but if you are able, we desperately need your support. You can, of course, bring by your offering envelopes to the church (open every day from 9 am- 6 pm), but better still, I would love for more people to sign up for **WeShare**, our online giving platform. In short, the benefit of WeShare for you is that it makes giving to St Patrick easier. For St Patrick, it grants us some financial consistency and security during times like summer vacations, virus pandemics, and all the other things in between. When I implemented this several years ago, I could not have predicted this Coronavirus situation, but I'm so glad we have it available. I hope that you would consider signing up to make a **recurring donation**.

For those that might not wish to sign up for a recurring donation (although I pray that you will), there is also the possibility to a **give one-time gift**. Easter is, perhaps obviously, one of the bigger collections we have throughout the year, and I have to be blunt, it would really hurt missing it this year. If you are able, I'm asking for your help.

To sign up, you can either find the link in the St Patrick section of www.glencovecatholic.org or go directly to <https://saintpatrickparishglencove.weshareonline.org/>.

FINAL WORD

Jesus. He's the final Word. While I take this pandemic seriously, I also know that come what may, when the time comes to leave this world, as it does for us all eventually, we need not fear even death because He has conquered death and given us life. Let's meet this current cross of ours with the fearlessness that belongs to us a children of God! God speed, be safe and healthy, and I hope to see you all soon. – Fr Gabriel