Dear Friends in Christ,

We are on the verge of opening up our churches in our diocese for public Masses again. There will be restrictions in place due to COVID-19. As we resume public Masses, let us have a greater spirit of joy in our hearts and also asking our Lord for patience. This is Good Shepherd Sunday weekend. We follow our shepherds at our parishes to do what can be done to have Masses resumed while still being prudent for everyone’s safety. Please keep close attention to your emails and Facebook regarding updates in the restrictions put into place with us resuming public Masses.

We are now more at the stages that we are beginning so see the impact this virus has had on us, family members, and friends. We hear of people being laid off, paychecks being reduced, or budgets significantly changing. My friends, these are hard crosses for us to hear about or to carry. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd. We and many souls need to trust in the Good Shepherd as we are living out the negatives effects from the virus, if we haven’t experienced them already.

For some of us, because we may be more blessed during this virus than others, we need to
open up more in our charitable hearts to help our fellow Man. Our Lord tells us from St. Matthew’s Gospel, “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12). The next few days, weeks, and maybe even months we will be witnessing souls who are struggling on many different levels because of how the virus has impacted their homes.

Opportunities to practice almsgiving are going to arise. As we hear from Tobit, “It is better to give alms than to store up gold, for almsgiving saves from death, and purges all sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life” (Tobit 12: 8-9).

Let us prepare for what our Lord has in store for us and many souls. United as faithful Catholics in the same flock underneath the Good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, let us keep faithful and our prayer life strong. Let us trust more in the Good Shepherd than we do in ourselves, remembering how much this Good Shepherd loves us by laying down His life for us, His flock, on the Cross. Be assured of my daily prayers for you all, let me know if I or the parishes may be able to help, stay close to the Mother of the Good Shepherd, and God bless you all.

In Christo et Maria,

Father Vogel
The important highlights are:

If you are symptomatic or have been in contact with someone who has had the virus in the past 14 days, do not come to church.

If you are 60 years or older or have a serious underlying condition, you are strongly encouraged to stay home.

You are obliged to wear a mask to church. If you arrive without one, you will be provided with one that you can keep and reuse. A donation for this mask would be appreciated.

Families will sit 6 feet apart in every other pew to ensure social distancing.

Mass will continue to be live streamed on St. Bridget's Facebook page. There will be the option to watch Mass from your vehicle in the parking lot and come in to the vestibule to receive communion. If you have this capability, it would be appreciated if you would "attend" Mass in this manner to reserve seating inside for those who cannot do so. We do not want to turn anyone away from receiving the Lord in the Eucharist due to there being no room in church. This would be one way we can serve one another and yet return to receiving Holy Communion.

Again, please read the full instructions on our web site. Some of them will not apply to weekday Masses, and those should be self-explanatory. Thank you for making the attendance at Mass a safe and holy experience for all.
If you could choose between all the wealth in the world or an intimate and loving relationship with Jesus, which would you choose? Do not answer that too quickly. We may know that choosing Jesus is the right answer, but would you choose Him? Imagine the power and worldly “freedom” you would enjoy if you had unlimited earthly wealth. And yet, the truth is that all the wealth in the world cannot produce one bit of happiness. It may make life easier in some ways, but far more complicated and burdensome in others. Many holy men and women have chosen a life of complete poverty because they discovered the riches produced by an authentic and transforming relationship with Jesus and they wanted nothing to get in the way. He offers this wealth to all of us. But most do not accept. Will you? (See Diary #587)

Do you understand the riches bestowed upon you if you choose to allow the abundant love of Jesus to flood your soul? Do you believe that this relationship is worth abandoning all else so as to attain it? Is your one desire in life the burning love of Jesus? If it is, this love will utterly transform you and the love from that relationship will flow forth from you, affecting every action you do and every other relationship you have. Choose our Lord as your most intimate lover and make Him the true center of your life.

Lord, I am aware of the fact that I can never fully grasp the depths of Your perfect love for me. Nonetheless, I choose Your love this day and I desire to make You the center of my life. Come fill my heart with such a burning love that I come to realize that You are all I need in life. For in coming to know You, my Lord, I come to love You and all your creatures. Jesus, I trust in You. (This free reflection can be found at: https://divinemercy.life/2020/04/30/reflection-122-if-you-could-choose-2/)
World Day of Prayer for Vocations

World Day of Prayer will be observed on Sunday, May 3, 2020, also known as "Good Shepherd Sunday." The purpose of this day is to publicly fulfill the Lord's instruction to, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest" (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2). Please pray that young men and women hear and respond generously to the Lord's call to the priesthood, diaconate, religious life, societies of apostolic life or secular institutes. You can find many resources to promote a culture of vocations on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Vocations website.

May 16-17: ‘Fishers of Men’—Tomorrow’s Priest Collection 2020

For an important message from Bishop Johnston regarding the support of our 24 seminarians, which costs about a Million dollars a year, please go to this web site. Also be looking for a letter from him in your mail at home.

Celebrating the Month of Mary

Did you know there’s a long-standing tradition of dedicating each month of the year to a particular devotion of our Catholic Faith?

For centuries, the month of May has traditionally been one to honor and celebrate Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ (more on the history of this here). Below are some ways to observe the month of Mary:

Ways to honor Mary in May

1. Put up an image of Mary in/around your home
2. Ask for Mary’s intercession
3. Hold your own May crowning of Mary at home
4. Pray a Rosary
5. Plant a Mary garden
6. Read Bible passages about Mary (The first two chapters of Luke are a good place to start!)
7. Make a morning offering prayer of your day to Jesus, through Mary
8. Learn more about Marian Consecration.
9. Pray the Angelus.
10. Follow Mary’s example—imitate her virtues, perform works of mercy
11. Read more about her—the writings of St. Alphonsus de Liguori, St. Louis de Montfort and St. Maximilian Kolbe may be good to try!
12. Listen to/sing hymns and songs about Mary
13. Learn more about four important Marian dogmas of our Faith.

From Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph - Celebrating the Month of Mary

CRS Rice Bowl

We are collecting the Rice Bowls that were made available at the beginning of Lent. They can be dropped off at church and placed on the oak table in the vestibule or taken to the office.
Reflections by Father Paul Turner

Fourth Sunday of Easter
1 Peter 2:20b-25

Doing Good, Feeling Good

Doing the right thing does not always feel good. You might take a stand for what you believe. Or you go out of your way to assist someone in need. But even in these circumstances, something can still go wrong. Others do not appreciate your sacrifice. You suffer ridicule. You experience loss. You know it is right to do good, but unfairly you do not always feel good.

The First Letter of Peter says, “If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. For this you have been called.”

The good we do is already a sign of our progress in the spiritual life, even if it does not feel that way. In the past, we may have avoided what is good if it seemed to threaten peace. We might have kept quiet about injustice in the workplace, the offenses of a neighbor, or the inappropriateness of derisive humor. Our silence gave consent. We were like sheep going astray.

But in Christ we know better. We do what is right even if it is unpopular. We speak up for the oppressed. We take time to defend human rights. We act with boldness we did not know before. We obtain this strength for doing good from the Shepherd of sheep, who guides and protects the flock.

Faith in Christ brings comfort and courage. It makes us feel loved, confident, and strong to suffer for doing what is good, even when it is unpopular.

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph is committed to combatting sexual abuse in the Church. If you are a victim of sexual abuse, or if you observe or suspect sexual abuse:

1. Call the Missouri Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.392.3738 (if the victim is currently under the age of 18), and
2. Contact your local law enforcement agency or call 911, and
3. After reporting to these civil and law enforcement authorities, report suspected sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult to the Diocesan Ombudsman, Joe Crayon, at 816.812.2500 or crayon@ombudsmankcsj.org, if the abuse involves a priest, deacon, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

The Diocese has a sincere commitment to providing care and healing resources to victims of sexual abuse and their families. Please contact the Victim Services Coordinator, Kathleen Chastain, at 816.392.0011 or chastain@diocesekcsj.org for more information.

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Welcome and thank you to our newest sponsors, the Heier family and Allied Litho of Kansas City.
St. Bridget Catholic Church
(816) 540-4563