



# GOOD SHEPHERD

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL

“In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

~ *John 16:33*

March 26, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

These are hard days. I don't like not knowing how long this pandemic will last, how bad its destruction to life and the economy will be, how long it will keep our community from celebrating together. I find the uncertainty to be emotionally and physically exhausting. Sunday was especially difficult. As I was praying before recording our Mass, your absence struck me deeply. No friendly greetings beforehand. No sounds of laughter. No cries from children. I felt like a shepherd without a flock, a father without a family.

Our Lord is allowing us to suffer this trial. Perhaps one day we will understand how it all fits into his wise and loving plan for the world. At the present, I am doing my best to adopt the disposition of Job, who bore his sufferings so well and who so confidently and humbly said: “We accept good things from God; should we not accept evil?”

I take comfort in what the Lord reveals through our patron, Saint Paul, in his letter to the Romans: “We know that all things work for good for those who love God.” The Lord can work good through this pandemic and all that follows from it. I pray that we can keep our eyes fixed intently on the Lord, waiting for his merciful help and open to receiving what he desires to work in us.

Prayer is our avenue to experiencing peace even as the world is in tumult – prayer that offers gratitude to God for his goodness and that makes our needs known to him. “Have no anxiety at all,” Saint Paul tells us by way of the Philippians, “but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Peace that surpasses all understanding ... that sounds pretty good about now.

Since we cannot join together at the altar, it is even more important for us to unite our hearts in prayer. Attached with this letter you will find the booklet of prayers that I am encouraging our parishioners to pray daily. You will also find a copy of the Stations of the Cross, through which we can unite our sufferings to our Lord's passion. In addition to these prayers, we can call upon the intercession of our Blessed Mother and meditate on the mysteries of the life of Christ by praying the Rosary. The Sorrowful Mysteries can offer particular solace during this time of suffering. I also encourage praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Litany in Time of Need, and the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Our plan is to keep the church open for prayer for several hours each day. This remains true even during the governor's stay-at-home order. While exercising prudence and precaution, we encourage you to spend some time with our Eucharistic Lord and to participate in the Sacrament of Confession. Here is the current schedule:

*Monday to Thursday*

Church open for prayer: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Adoration and Confession: 8 to 9 a.m. and 12 to 1 p.m.

*Friday*

Church open for prayer: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Adoration and Confession: 8 to 9 a.m., and 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., 2 to 3 p.m., and 7 to 8 p.m.

*Saturday*

Church open for prayer: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Adoration and Confession: 9 to 10 a.m., 1 to 2 p.m., and 4 to 5 p.m.

*Sunday*

Church open for prayer: 12 to 5 p.m.

Adoration and Confession: 12 to 1 p.m. and 4 to 5 p.m.

If you come to pray, please note that we are limited to 10 people in the church at any given time. During the hours of Adoration and Confession, I count as one of them. Please count the people in the church before taking your place, and please be generous in offering others the opportunity to pray if you notice them waiting. Please wash your hands when you enter and when you leave. When you finish praying, please use a disinfectant wipe to sanitize the area where you were sitting.

Prayer, we might say, is when we reach out to God. Now is also an important time for us to reach out to one another. You recently received (or at least, should have received) a parish directory (call us if you didn't). Please use it to reach out to some folks you know and maybe even some folks you don't. Making such connections is a good way to navigate the social distancing and isolation required by our present challenge.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have a need for the Sacrament of Confession or Anointing of the Sick. I will make every effort to bring the grace of the sacraments to you. This may require some creativity, flexibility, and patience. If you are faced with a sacramental emergency (danger of death) please contact me using the emergency number: 612.567.0535.

While we are not able to gather for Mass, I continue to offer Mass daily for the given intentions. When the Masses do not already have an intention, I will offer them for the people of Good Shepherd and for swift and lasting remedies for our present trials. We are recording all our Masses and posting them to our parish website and YouTube channel. Additionally, we will livestream Sunday Masses at 10:30 a.m. This will happen at our parish Facebook page. You do not need to have a Facebook account to access this page or the livestream.

I continue to pray for your holiness, happiness, perseverance, and fidelity. I humbly ask you to do the same for me.

Be of good cheer,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Father Marquard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Father Marquard