



HOLY FAMILY
CATHOLIC CHURCH

March 23, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends:

We are living through some of the most troubling times our Church, nation and world has faced in most of our lifetimes. Not only are we facing the health threats created by the spread of Covid-19 but also the economic uncertainty as people are furloughed, small business and restaurants close their doors and the Stock Market crashes. Those who are retired and living on a fixed income have watched their 401Ks and retirement plans lose a third of their value. In past crises we have been able to turn to the Church, and especially the Mass and Eucharist, for comfort but because of the fear of the spread of disease, liturgical celebrations have been canceled. But despite all of the uncertainty and suffering, we are a people of hope. We know that the crosses we are carrying during this Lenten season in solidarity with Christ will also lead to resurrection. Despite the hardships of the present moment, God is still with us as long as we have our faith. Think of all the Catholics around the world who have undergone persecution for their faith and who went months, years and decades without celebrating the Eucharist and yet they never lost faith. They found ways to keep their faith alive even without the Mass. We will emerge even stronger in our faith and with a greater appreciation for the Mass and Eucharist.

That being said, I wanted to take this opportunity to share some information from the Diocese and Parish to help us weather this current storm of uncertainty. Most of this information you have read before but since some may not have access to the internet I wanted to share it with you.

1. All public liturgical celebrations have been suspended in the Diocese until further notice. This means that all weekend and daily Masses at Holy Family Church have been cancelled until at least after Easter. All Holy Week and Easter service will be celebrated without a congregation. There will be no public Masses on Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday.
2. Those in our RCIA programs preparing to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation will have to wait for the celebration until a later date to be determined. We are looking at the possibility of celebrating the Sacraments on Pentecost.
3. All communal prayer celebrations are suspended. Parishioners are not permitted to gather in groups in the Church to pray the rosary, the Stations of the Cross or any other private devotion.
4. Priests will celebrate their private Mass daily but without a congregation. It will continue to be celebrated for the "Intention of the Donor" so those who arranged for particular Mass intentions can be assured that Mass is continuing to be celebrated for their intentions.
5. Private confessions will continue to be celebrated on Saturdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. (*except Saturday, April 11*). We ask that penitents maintain the appropriate social distancing. Only "behind-the-screen" confessions will be celebrated and no face-to-face option will be provided. Private confessions will also be offered on Wednesday, April 1, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

6. The Church will be open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for private prayer. The Eucharistic Devotional Chapel will be closed because of its confined space.
7. All meetings will be suspended at the Parish until further notice. This includes all parish and non-parish groups that use the facilities. This means that the Knights, CCW, Scouts, AA, Choir and any other group will not be permitted to use the meeting rooms for any meetings.
8. This year we have a large number of children preparing for First Communion on Saturday, May 9. At this time we are still planning that celebration. Students in the First Communion class are continuing their instruction on-line so they will be prepared for the Sacrament.
9. All visits to the homebound and nursing homes by our ministers and Pastor are suspended until further notice. This is done for everyone's protection. If, however, there is a life threatening emergency, please contact the rectory and the situation will be evaluated on how best to address the need without putting anyone at risk.
10. The Parish Office will remain open from 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Thursday. The Diocese has recommended that you limit your visits to the Office unless it is absolutely necessary. If questions can be answered over the phone, that would be best.
11. Finally, some parishioners have asked about continuing to contribute to the Parish during these difficult times. They realize that every Sunday that we are not able to celebrate Mass means the loss of significant income needed to pay our bills. First, let me say to all parishioners that your first priority is taking care of yourselves and those closest to you. I realize that with the Stock Market crash many 401Ks and IRAs have suffered large losses. Some parishioners have been furloughed and other business owners have had to close their doors and lay off workers. My concern is for each individual parishioner and your well-being. The Parish can get by for some time with our savings and limited spending. That being said, if you are in a position to contribute to the Parish so we can continue to pay our basic bills, I would suggest setting up an on-line giving account. This will eliminate the need for you to mail in envelopes or drop your donation off at the office. If you go to the parish webpage it will walk you through, step-by-step, on how to set that up. You can continue to send in your donation envelopes if that is easier for you. But please remember, our first concern is for you and your welfare, so take care of yourself first and if you have a little to share with the Parish, it would be appreciated.

For additional information about the Diocese' response to this crisis facing our world and local community, please go to DIOSLC.ORG for the latest updates from Bishop Oscar Solis. Please feel free to contact the Parish Office if you have any questions.

During these difficult times know that you are all in my daily Masses and prayers.

Sincerely,



Rev. Bill Wheaton
Pastor