

Saint Charles Borromeo Church
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April 4, 2020

Dear St. Charles Parishioner:

Although it has only been two weeks, it seems that our "stay at home" and "social distancing" practices have been our custom for a long time. Now we have been told that--at least through the month of April--we must continue with our new lifestyle--until the dreaded virus has run its course. We were so accustomed to doing "whatever we want" "whenever we want:" So we must learn to be more patient. I am allocating my time in new ways: I gave my office a thorough cleaning, I make lots of phone calls daily to check up on parishioners, I say Mass "online" with growing confidence, and I have learned that I can cook almost anything in a crockpot!

Father Lou Thomas underwent a successful surgery on Monday, March 30. The doctor is sure "he got it all." Father Lou expected to be discharged by the end of the week. He will recuperate with family. The hospital would not permit visitors, but Father thanks us for our concern and he does ask us for continued prayers.

We have been doing a lot of rescheduling: Confirmation, First Communion, and a variety of other programs and activities, scheduled for April and early May, will all take place later in the year--the exact dates and times are yet to be determined. This includes several couples who had special plans for their wedding days. I promise, we will make it all happen in grand style when the present health crisis is overcome.

This is Palm Sunday. Adhering strictly to State of Ohio guidelines, we will postpone distribution of palms until we can again gather as a community in our church. This will be a very different Holy Week. Since we cannot celebrate those special Triduum ("Three Days") ceremonies in our church, I encourage you to participate by accessing the Holy Week liturgies streamed from St John Cathedral in downtown Cleveland. (Go to www.saintjohncathedral.com)

The Holy Thursday liturgy celebrates the gifts of Eucharist and the loving service we are called to extend to one another. While our church building is open 7:00am to 7:00pm daily for your personal prayer and devotion, also do the best you can to look after those who are most vulnerable: the elderly and those who are alone. Good Friday and the crucifix have special meaning for us this year. We unite our current trials and troubles to the sufferings of Jesus. He, too, asked to be spared His Cross; we are called to share His courage, His dignity, and His perseverance. We take confidence in the knowledge of Easter's promise. May this year's unique circumstances deepen our understanding of the Paschal Mystery.

Now I must ask for your help. The parish depends upon your voluntary generosity to survive. Since the obligation to attend Mass has been lifted and liturgies cannot be celebrated, our income has severely plummeted. We have taken basic economies: the heat is off in our church, schools, hall, and activity center (except Merici Chapel). ; other non-essential services have been curtailed or cancelled. But we are still way behind. And that is only after two weeks. Now we must face four "non-collection" Sundays in April. If your employment has been affected, of course I understand. But if you are able, please forward your offertory for March and April. In particular, I request your extraordinary generosity for Easter Sunday. Just mail your offertory to our Parish Office, or drop it in the slot (marked Key Return) to the right of the Parish Office door. Also consider electronic giving: go to our website, www.stcharlesonline.org, and scroll down on the right to "ON LINE GIVING." Since I am asking you for your help, I will tell you that I plan to double my own monthly financial contribution to the parish. If it were not necessary, I would not ask. Thank you for whatever you are able to do!

I will look forward to greeting you online at the 11:00am Masses on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, And, even in these most difficult circumstances, may this be the holiest of weeks for all of us!

Father Carlin