



March 25, 2020

My Dear Parish Family,

These are truly uncertain times. I think it's safe to say that there isn't one among us who can say that they have ever experienced a moment such as this. In our wildest imagination we could have never thought that our beloved St. Catherine of Siena would be forced to close its doors and that our city, state and country would likewise shut down.

What does come as no surprise to me is that this vibrant community stands at the ready to jump into action to help others in the midst of this COVID-19 crisis. The query for the moment is not whether to help but how. Our ordinary ministerial processes are no longer possible with this viral threat. So we must find creative and new ways to make, build, and maintain community and familial bonds; we must continue to deepen our lives of prayer and sacrificial love **and we must find a way to do this together** even though we cannot gather. So we must build a spiritual community that shares the light of Christ one person at a time.

We are more concerned than ever for the wellbeing of all in our community. **We are concerned about each and every one of you.** Fragile seniors, isolated young professionals, weary families and all those who struggle with mental and physical illnesses are often disconnected from loved ones and lacking a support system. The community of St. Catherine of Siena must remain committed to stay present and work through this crisis and the best way to do this in these trying times is for each member of this community to be willing to extend a helping hand to a neighbor in need. Do you know a vulnerable member of our community (one over 60 or with medical issues) who lives nearby. Perhaps they need groceries, medicine or other supplies and could use some procurement assistance. Maybe you know someone who has no internet or WIFI access. Perhaps you could invite them to your home to share a live streamed Mass or help them to make connections with friends and family. Even something as simple as stopping by to say hello and ask about their health and needs might brighten their day. That's how we can be the light of Christ one person at a time.

Although our Parish life has been put on hold, **we are still here for you and we must each be there for each other.** Our ministries will look very different. I know that we all treasure accompanying each other on the path into a deeper relationship with Christ. We honor and cherish the values of hospitality and community. With this virus, we must pause, take a deep breath, and reclaim who we are as Catholics and find new ways to share the gifts we have been given with others one person at a time. But remember that although you may be acting alone, the entire community of St. Catherine of Siena will be sharing this journey with you as your spiritual companion.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
Matthew 18:20

As many of you probably know by now, we have begun to live-stream weekday Mass at 12 noon and will live stream a Sunday Mass at 9:30 (www.stcatherine-austin.org/live). Each Mass is recorded for later viewings. We also intend to begin to live stream Adoration and the Rosary following each Mass. I'm sure that we will find other ways to use our new live streaming capability so stay tuned.



Our work at St. Catherine of Siena continues and the staff will be working to serve our community. We have committed to continue to pay our staff members and bills. However, weekly cash/check Mass offertory collections represent at least 70% of the parish income. To help with this anticipated reduction in income and ensure we have greater stability moving forward, we prayerfully encourage you to transition your weekly offertory giving to online giving. Online giving allows you to make one-time or recurring contributions to St. Catherine of Siena from your bank account or credit/debit card. You can access the online giving portal by clicking the blue Donate button on the upper right hand corner of the Parish webpage. If you need assistance with the online giving process, please contact Erin Hummel at 512-892-2420 or Erin.Hummel@stcatherine-austin.org. If you would like to continue to give through a weekly offering envelope, your donation can be mailed to the Parish Office, 4800 Convict Hill Road, Austin, Texas 78749. At this time, please do not send cash in the mail.

This community always rises to every challenge, and this Coronavirus is no exception. Our community knows how to get really hard things done. God is with us!

I invite you to do two important things each day:

- Every time you wash your hands, think of three things you are grateful for; and
- Please keep us in your prayers.

I, Fr. Ray and Fr. Lou will keep *you* in our daily prayers as well.

With love,

Fr. Pat
Pastor