

PASTORAL LETTER FROM MSGR. NEVIN - MAY 26, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

I hope that this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy. Having observed a “shelter at home” order for over two months, I am sure that we are all *chafing at the bit* to return to a more normal life style. Our media reports some significant progress in developing a vaccine so let’s all pray that it turns out to be what we need to turn things around for the better.

I would like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date with what’s happening here in our local Church of Saint Aedan, as well as the rest of the Archdiocese. Father Ivan and I continue to conduct burial services for some of our parishioners who have *gone home to God*. (Check our web site.) We have also visited a number of homes to administer the Last Rites. As you know, we take turns celebrating daily and Sunday masses which we have been streaming via our parish web site www.StAedan.org and Facebook www.facebook.com/StAedansMedia. Also, throughout the day, individuals continue to stop by to pray in the church, or request that candles be lighted for special intentions. Our parking area has, at times, become a magnet for a few of our local bicyclists, joggers and walkers as well as a staging area for a few birthday caravans. It’s good that we have three different and very spacious parking areas so people are able to spread out and distance. Many thanks to Chief Don Butterworth and our Orangetown Police Department for providing an ongoing presence on our church property day and night.

Last week, the Cardinal held a press conference and the Archdiocese followed up with some updated information which I will now share with you. The following procedures remain in place until further notice. I applaud our President for recently declaring our Houses of Worship as *essential* during this crisis.

Confessions - beginning **Saturday, June 6th**, Father Ivan and I will begin hearing **Confessions** starting at **1pm** - by appointment only. We will be using the spacious meeting room, adjacent to the gym. Those who are interested are asked to request an **appointment** by emailing us at StAedan@optonline.net. You need not leave a name just write “*I would like a confession appointment please*”. We will REPLY with a time. The appointment slots will be assigned *sequentially*, as calls are received. **All will be required to wear masks and proper social distancing will be observed at all times**

Baptisms - continue to be deferred to a future date, except in the case of extreme emergency. However, this may be changing in the near future, with a maximum of ten from a family being allowed to attend the ceremony in church.

Funeral Masses or Services - in the church or funeral home are still not allowed to be conducted at this time. We will let you know when this changes. Once public masses are allowed to resume, we will begin planning memorial masses for our beloved deceased. *Outdoor* burial services, limited to ten persons, will continue to be the norm for now.

Weddings - are not allowed, at this time, unless absolutely necessary. If, for some reason, a wedding must take place, only the officiant, the couple and two witnesses may be in attendance. (Ex. A soldier being deployed overseas, etc.)

Holy Communion - at present, may be distributed as *viaticum* only. This is a part of the *Last Rites* of the Church which consist of Confession, *Communion* and Anointing. We expect this to change very soon as guidelines are being finalized for the distribution of Holy Communion *outside* of Mass.

Mass – an Archdiocesan committee has developed plans which include how masses may be celebrated, organized, attended, etc. A reminder that during this health crisis, the Sunday and Holy Day *obligation* to attend mass has been suspended. At present, the Archdiocese still does not permit *public* daily or Sunday Mass.

PREP - online registrations are currently being conducted for our Fall Classes. We are working diligently on an effective, as well as safe, plan for the re-opening of our Fall PREP classes. Rockland public and parochial schools continue to struggle with what to do in the Fall. Parents, please stay tuned.

Confirmation (10/4) and First Holy Communion (10/17) - dates remain unchanged at present. However, these will have to be finalized once we approach the Fall and we see how capacity restrictions are handed down to us at that time. Let's pray and keep our fingers crossed.

Parish Office - remains closed and our *nonessential* parish personnel remain sheltered at home. We apologize for your having to reach us via the answering service, but we have found this to be the most practical, effective way for you to contact us. The service tries its best to track us down in an emergency. For non-emergencies, they send us an email message from the caller. You may also send us a direct email message at StAedan@optonline.net.

Hospitals - still do NOT allow parish clergy in to visit patients. At present, Nyack Hospital has no Catholic chaplain service available inside the hospital, even for emergencies. Good Samaritan Hospital, however, has their own chaplain for patient visits. A chaplain may be requested by contacting the Good Samaritan Pastor Care Office. (845-368-5000)

WeShare - membership has increased dramatically since the lockdown began two months ago. Please check out this practical and easy option for sending us your contributions, for information, just visit our parish web site. Again, present members are reminded to please keep their accounts current regarding credit card expiration dates.

Weekly Offertory - contributions continue to arrive by mail, or are dropped off here in the Rectory mail slot. A really big 'thank you' to all of you whose financial means allows you to continue sending in your monetary support for our beautiful parish. To those of you who are out of work, or financially challenged at this time, we pray that things will change for the better in the very near future. God bless you. As last reported, our weekly income is still down about **35%** since March and this reflects the financial picture across the Archdiocese. A big thanks to those who have increased their donations to help make up our weekly short fall. It really helps.

As we approach the end of our Easter season, please return your **MITE BOXES**, or send us a check in the amount you have put aside for the charitable works of Catholic Community Services of Rockand. They have taken a big financial hit because of the virus. Their fundraising plans have all been canceled, during a time when their services are in higher demand than ever. Also, our **SVDP Food Pantry** continues to serve our regular clients and few new ones. Your ongoing donations of food, paper goods, ShopRite cards or money is greatly appreciated.

The **Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal** has now realized **\$58,455.00** in pledges from **162** donors. This represents **61%** of our assigned parish goal of **\$96,000.00**.

As of May 4th, our **Renew & Rebuild** capital campaign has deposited **\$864,027.60** in the bank. This represents **62.3%** of our original pledge total of **\$1,387,825.00**. **\$523,798.00** of the original pledge total remains to be collected. Unfortunately, for one reason or another, a number of our pledges have not been honored and so our remaining balance will be lower than originally budgeted. We need this money to fund the last and biggest of our capital projects, the refurbishment of our driveway and parking lot complex. If your financial means will allow, please keep paying off those pledges. If you have experienced a payment issue with the **R&R** office, please send me an email at the above address, or send me a letter and I will try to straighten it out for you. If you are not one of our original **R&R** pledgers, you may still contribute to our **Saint Aedan Capital Fund**, where 100% of the money remains in our parish. Please *email or mail* me about your interest in supporting this vital fund.

In conclusion, Father Ivan and I would like you to know that you are always remembered in our prayers and masses. We hope and pray that you and all of your loved ones will be safe and healthy throughout this health crisis. We are grateful for your prayers, on our behalf, as well. God bless you. Saint Aedan pray for us.

Prayerfully in Christ,

Msgr. Emmet Nevin

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Pastor