

# St. Edward Church

## **STATEMENT ON CORONAVIRUS AND SUSPENSION OF PUBLIC MASSES**

**By Fr. Scott Bullock 3.19.2020**  
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In 1966, the Beatles sang, in “Eleanor Rigby,” their song about loneliness: “Father McKenzie, writing the words of a sermon no one will hear, no one comes near...” With the extraordinary events of this week, including the decision by Archbishop that public Masses would be suspended until further notice, I have been left wondering if a statement I make today (Tuesday) will still be applicable tomorrow, and, even if I do make the statement, whether it will be heard, as “no one comes near.” Nevertheless, we will continue to communicate with our parish family through the parish website (sted.org), including access there to the weekly bulletin, and through Facebook, where I hope all will continue to receive updates.

As I mentioned in a homily several weeks ago, the “coronavirus” situation is both a public health situation and a spiritual struggle. As Catholics, the coronavirus and the related obligation to “social distancing” and suspension of public Masses is particularly troubling. At the very heart of being Catholic is our need to gather as community, particularly for the Eucharist. While other religious traditions might be ready to emphasize one’s bilateral relationship with God, the Catholic sensibility of our relationship with God is always tied up together with others. Our emphasis on the saints, weekly Mass, and our church authority all speak to the truth that we are on our pilgrim way to God together. With this instinct, we will be looking for ways to maintain some level of Communion, that is, a spiritual gathering of our parish family, even while we are barred from physical gatherings as a parish family.

As a beginning of the effort, I want you to know that a Sunday order of worship and the words of that “sermon that no one will hear” will IN FACT be available each weekend by Saturday Noon on the parish website. To maintain a connection with your parish family and the Sunday worship of God in which we join each Sunday, I would invite you to gather with your family, read aloud the scriptures (as we do at Mass), have someone read the homily, and then have some discussion about what the scriptures and homily say to us all. I am confident that the Holy Spirit will use the scriptures during these days to offer us wisdom and consolation.

Another venerable Catholic practice is to “make a visit.” The elevator door of the church will remain open daily from 7am-7pm. While we will not be able to gather in large numbers in our parish church, I would invite your family to consider making regular visits for prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the church. The church space will remain open daily from approximately 7:00 am until 7:00 pm. Bring your bible, other spiritual reading, or read the readings in the missalette for the upcoming Sunday and spend some time in prayer for your family, your parish family, and our nation and world at this time. Pray also for those who are sickened by this virus and those who care for them. We’ll make extra efforts to thoroughly clean the church space to the best of our abilities.

In the meantime, I want you to know that I will be celebrating Mass daily for you and your families. Please join me at the regularly scheduled Mass time in prayer, wherever you are, and make a “spiritual Communion” at that time, even while you go about your lives. The Roman poet Sextus (born around 50 BC) seems the first to have been credited saying “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Let’s pray for each other, as we await the fond reunion of our parish family around the Eucharistic table, God willing, very soon!

Fr. Scott Bullock