



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL
1011 FIRST AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022

March 25, 2020
Feast of the Annunciation
Season of Lent
Month of Saint Joseph

Dear Family of the Archdiocese of New York:

The coronavirus has attacked not only our city, state, nation, and world, but also our daily lives as we experience social isolation and quarantine. We pray with and for one another.

Like all families and households, the Archdiocese of New York has been adapting to these new protocols to ensure we can continue to practice the faith with our archdiocesan family. While public Masses at our churches have been cancelled during this crisis, our priests continue to celebrate Mass every day. Even though they are celebrated without any congregation present, many pastors have begun to livestream their Masses on Facebook and YouTube, and I understand more are planning to do so in the days ahead, and our churches are open for individuals to pray. You can also participate in the celebration of the Eucharist at Saint Patrick's Cathedral which is available on many cable systems via the Catholic Faith Network and its website at www.catholicfaithnetwork.org, livestreamed on the St. Patrick's Cathedral website at www.saintpatrickscathedral.org/live, and broadcast on radio on The Catholic Channel of Sirius XM (Channel 129). I was not surprised to learn during a recent video conference call with all the priests, that they are making every effort to provide pastoral care to their people, although under very controlled conditions.

Our daily lives have been altered in so many ways by the impact of this virus. Illness, job loss, school closings, movies, Broadway, restaurants, sports all shuttered – the list goes on! For us Catholics, not being able to attend Mass at our parish church is a real loss, particularly during this holy season of Lent. All of this leads to a sense of fear and uncertainty.

Although some of the visible work of the Church – like public worship and the sacraments – seems to have been “put on hold” during this crisis, the work of the Church in prayer, charity, and health care remains active and vibrant! Even more, the *invisible* work at the heart of the Church's mission continues. God's mercy and grace are just as abundant as ever, and our prayers and supplications are always heard!

As Jesus told us, “Fear is useless. What is needed is trust.” Trust in the God who created us, who loves us completely, and invites us to trust in Him!

Nothing is more important than the health and well-being of our people, soul, mind, and body. Please know that the archdiocese's healthcare agency, ArchCare has established a 24-hour hotline to assist with any aspect of the coronavirus. If you have questions or other health-related concerns, call their hotline at 877-239-1998. If you are experiencing other challenges, our Catholic Charities stands ready to lend assistance wherever possible. Do not hesitate to call them at 888-744-7900.

From an early stage, the archdiocese established a working group to monitor the outbreak of the virus and review the preparedness procedures for our parishes, schools, cemeteries, offices, and many other apostolates and institutions. This team has performed excellently through these unprecedented times. We have adhered to all directives implemented by civil authorities and reputable health organizations. The safety of our people is of the utmost importance to us and we will continue to take necessary measures to protect our community.

Just like you and your family, the parishes of the archdiocese are suffering from this crisis as well. Now, perhaps more than at any time in recent history, your parish and the archdiocese need your help. It can't survive without you.

Now that our public Masses have been cancelled for an undetermined period of time, I am appealing to you to support your parish by continuing to share your gift of Sunday offertory. These funds are critical for the continued operation of your parish at this unprecedented moment in time. Your parish does so much more than offer Sunday Mass. It is there in the happiest moments in your life – wedding, baptisms, first communions – and is a source of comfort during some of the most challenging, during times of sorrow like the death of a loved one. There are prayer groups, food pantries, social activities, schools, and on-going religious education. All of this depends on you! Please continue, at a minimum, with your current level of support. One easy way to do so is through your parish's online giving provider; a majority of our parishes use WeShare. Your parish's online giving account can be accessed through the parish's website. I know your pastors will be most appreciative and relieved to know that they can depend on receiving your continued offertory support each Sunday. I am not being alarmist when I say that without your support, your parish may be seriously undermined.


At the same time, I call upon our heroic scholarship donors who always come to the rescue of our wonderful schools. Our education and development teams will be reaching out to you to seek your assistance in funding needy families at this time.

Our finance people have been very honest with me, expressing their grave concerns about our ability to cover our overhead during this crisis at this time. While I certainly do not want to even consider layoffs, it may be necessary to implement an archdiocesan wide salary furlough of up to 25% for all employees, with the prayer and hope for an early return to normality. We need your loyalty to the *Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal* and *Renew and Rebuild* more than ever!

Thank you for reading this somber letter, and know that I regret having to bring more uncertainty and worry during this already unsettled time. But you have told me that you appreciate honesty and transparency.

Yet, our most appropriate response is faith and confidence, along with charity to others.

With renewed gratitude for all that you do for our Catholic family, and prayerful best wishes for a blessed Lent, I am,

Faithfully in Christ,

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York