

Hello all!

March 18, 2020

We sincerely hope you are home healthy and coping well with all the sudden changes to daily life that we've experienced over the last week. This is uncharted territory in so many ways! But with uncertainty and change comes the opportunity to deepen our faith and turn wholeheartedly to Jesus. With that, here is how we are implementing the directions from our Diocese. [If you'd like to read the whole directive, click here.](#)

1- No public Masses or any type of in-person gathering. That means youth group, RE, Bible study, Stations of the Cross are all canceled till at least March 30. Father is still saying Mass on our behalf privately every day.

2- We are still open for spiritual needs as permitted. St. Joseph in Choteau will be open from 9am to 6pm every day for personal prayer. St. John in Fairfield will be open on Wednesday from 4-6pm and on Sunday from 9am-noon. Please limit people in the sanctuary to 10 or fewer and respect current social distancing recommendations of 6 feet between people (except within family units). And feel free to bring wipes and clean the space you are in as you feel best protects yourself and others. If your mental health needs a change of space or a place to get out of the house, come sit before the Blessed Sacrament.

3- Father can still hear individual confessions as long as we respect social distances to keep everyone healthy. To honor his time, please text or call him at 406-475-1218 so that he knows there will be people coming to take advantage of this grace. (After a couple days home full-time with my children, I really need this grace!!) Father can be in Choteau Saturday evening, Fairfield Sunday morning, and Augusta Sunday night, but will only be there if he knows this Sacrament is wanted, so let him know and confirm a time and make sure we are spread out to have fewer than 10 people in our churches at one time.

4- With RE Classes & Youth group canceled, we have some resources available. Tonight - March 18 - Bishop Vetter is hosting a [virtual youth group](#) for all 7th -12th grade students (younger & older might like it too). It will begin right at 7pm and have live chat and other ways to engage. Its very important for our students to know they are not alone and get this chance to connect across our diocese. Follow the link or reply to this e-mail to get plugged in. Reconciliation materials will soon be mailed to families to help make sure students are ready for their first Sacraments whenever that may be. We may also arrange times to send home books and other materials to continue RE classes at home.

5- Finances... I know no one every likes to talk about money, but even though we can't celebrate Mass, we still have bills to pay. If your finances allow you to make your regular gift, please drop it in the mail (St. Joseph PO Box 640 Choteau, MT 59422 or St. John & St. Matthias PO Box 397 Fairfield, MT 59436). A drop box may be available during the times the churches are open eventually, but that hasn't been figured out yet. If you are able to pay extra, please consider doing so since there are many financially impacted by this virus who will not be able to give like normal.

6- Loving our neighbor and paying attention to each other has never been more important. Please check (via phone call first) on those who may be overlooked, lonely or in need. We are our best when we quietly care for those who we are able. Even for those who are doing well, a cheery phone call can still be a great blessing.

7 - Internet resources are abundant! With time at home, spiritually attend daily Mass and prayerfully unite yourself to Christ in the Eucharist. Bishop Vetter will be livestreaming Mass every day at noon beginning on Thursday, March 19 at <https://diocesehelena.org/>. [Bishop Barron is sharing a daily](#)

[Mass](#) that will be posted by 8:30 every morning. Hopefully we will have a parish rosary live on one of our facebook pages and some other ways we can still connect. Speaking of Facebook, that has been the venue for sharing most of the Diocesan announcements, but Facebook keeps showing fewer and fewer of the posts to people who have "liked" the pages. So feel free to share, comment, click on, etc. - all of those actions make it more likely to be shared with the people who need to see it. [Choteau](#) [Fairfield](#) [Augusta](#) each have their own Facebook page and our website will have the most current updates: jmjparishes.com.

Thank you for reading this far! God is still in control and we rest in His loving hand. I'll exit with this prayer of spiritual communion - because I find reassurance in it.

May God bless you! ~Laura Toeckes, pastoral assistant, 406-463-2586

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you
are present in the Most Holy
Sacrament of your Body and Blood.
I love You and desire to receive You.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You Sacramentally,
come spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You and unite myself
wholly to You. Never let me
be separated from You.

Amen.