

Dear Parishioners,

As we gather this weekend for the fifth week of Lent, our world is certainly turned upside down. This pandemic that we are all dealing with has made a huge difference in our lives. Children in remote learning and many moms and dads are working from home. The world has told us that so many things are important and yet right now, we see that the two important parts of our lives are God and family. I am happy that so many of you have joined us for live-streaming of masses, our holy hour, Stations of the Cross and the rectory chats that Fr. Alex and I are hosting daily which I hope you are enjoying. I encourage you as a family to pray together and join us for mass or one of our other devotions at a time that best suits your family. Be assured of my prayers and the prayers of Fr. Alex both at mass and privately during these difficult times. Let us be aware of those living alone so that through texting, phone calls and emails they will feel less isolated. Let us keep in mind the many who are temporarily out of work and keep them in prayer. If you haven't been able to watch any of our live streaming events and would like to do so, please click on the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxDjkwKB1QcmS-KLoQPzQLw>

Please be sure to subscribe either as a family or individually. We hope to get 1,000 subscribers in order to get benefits.

In this week's gospel, we hear about Jesus' close friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus. We know that Lazarus was very ill and died; the two sisters were upset but trusted in Jesus. To their amazement and joy, Jesus called Lazarus back to life. He said to those surrounding him, "Unbind him and let him go free." What do we need to be unbound from? Fear of the Coronavirus? Fear of decreasing income? Fear of a recession? Let us trust in God to give us the courage each day to meet the challenges of life head on and know that the Lord God will never abandon us. Keep close to God through prayer and devotion. We will feel his strength and sense his love.

I deeply appreciate the continued financial support that you our beloved parishioners give to St. Luke parish. This weekend, we received slightly over \$700 in revenue but realize we normally receive \$3,500 in our weekly envelope collection. Please consider, if you are comfortable, our eGiving program through Faith direct and use church code NJ476 or click: <https://membership.faithdirect.net/enroll/nj476> If you are not comfortable doing so, we would so appreciate you mailing in a check with your name to St. Luke parish or dropping your envelope in the after hours box at the entrance to the narthex. As you can imagine, our bills are still coming in and our expenses remain the same.

When we began our Lenten sacrifice for Catholic Charities on Ash Wednesday, none of us ever thought that we would be in a position where it was unsafe to have public mass. However, I would still very much like, you our parishioners to continue to make this sacrifice. This weekend, Fr. Alex will speak about seminarian education and help you to understand the cost and great benefit of these wonderful young men. When you as a family have completed the Lenten season, I invite you between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, to mail in a check payable to St. Luke parish and write Catholic Charities in the memo line. You can also participate through Faith Direct as a one-time donation to Catholic Charities.

On behalf of Fr. Alex, be assured of our prayers. Should you need to contact us any time, please call (908) 208 4311 or simply come to the rectory.

With prayerful affection,

Father Owen