

Dear Parishioners,

Last Wednesday, April 1st, Bishop communicated to every parish that for the foreseeable future, our churches must be closed every day to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

As we gather to celebrate Palm Sunday, things are very different from every other year. Because of safety concerns, regarding the Coronavirus, our bishop has asked us not to distribute palms on Palm Sunday weekend but at a later time. I will let you know when the blessing and distribution of palms will take place. Our Palm Sunday Mass will be celebrated on Sunday at 10 a.m. via live stream. If possible, I invite you to join us so that we can all celebrate this most holy day together. For those of you who have commitments in the morning, you can naturally be part of the Mass at the time of your choosing.

Fr. Alex and I are offering confessions on Monday, April 6th and Tuesday, April 7th from 3:30-6:30 p.m. We will be hearing confessions from our cars at the back of the parking lot. Our parishioner, retired Lt. Ed Noonan will direct everybody to the appropriate space. This is a wonderful opportunity to prepare for Easter and I truly encourage individuals and families to come during those times and feel the loving strength of Jesus in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Thursday begins the Triduum, that is, the three holy days of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Our liturgies will be celebrated privately but in our hearts and in our minds, we will bring all of you with us to the table of the Lord during these profound days. I again ask you to join us through the live broadcasting of our liturgies so that together as a family, we can walk with Jesus Christ from the Last Supper through the Garden of Gethsemane, Good Friday and until Easter Sunday morning. The following celebrations will all be live-streamed:

- ***On Holy Thursday***, we will celebrate the Mass of the Last Supper at 7 p.m.
- ***On Good Friday***,
 - The Passion of Christ will be celebrated at 3 p.m. This will include the reading of the gospel, the Veneration of the Cross and spiritual Holy Communion.
 - We will lead you in the Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m. Please join us for this very special Good Friday opportunity to walk with Christ in his suffering.
- ***The Vigil Mass of Easter*** will be celebrated on Holy Saturday at 8 p.m. While it is not possible to baptize our non-Christian or to administer Holy Communion and Confirmation to our seven RCIA members, please keep them in prayer and when everything has returned to normal, we will have that joyful celebration.
- ***Our Easter Sunday Mass*** will be celebrated at 10 a.m. and we invite you to joyfully celebrate Jesus' resurrection with us from your home.

I encourage each of you to set aside time during these days of Holy Week and as a family, to talk about the special gifts that we are given to reflect God's love. As usual, Fr. Alex and I will explain each of these liturgies in our homily but afterwards I invite parents to have discussions with their children on the true meaning of these holy and special days.

A big **THANK YOU** to our parish staff who are working remotely! I appreciate their help and support. To Deacon Ray and Deacon Mike, who are such support to us at this time, to Lenny and Dan our musicians, a big **THANK YOU!** Welcome back to Kathy and some members of the choir for these Triduum liturgies. Please keep Fr. Mike, our beloved pastor emeritus in our prayers. He is lying low and safe at his condo here in Long Valley. Please keep in touch with him at this time. We extend our prayers also to Deacon Kevin in Red Bank and Deacon Art and Nancy in Hackettstown.

On behalf of Fr. Alex, be assured of our prayers and thoughts at this time. If you need us at anytime, please call us at (908) 280 4311. Love, Father Owen