



Church of Saint Bernard

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Dear Parishioner,

March 19, 2020

I pray that you are well and in good spirits, and that God is keeping his hand on you and your loved ones.

You may have heard that Archbishop Hebda has decided, after much prayer and reflection, to suspend all Masses for the for this time. In his letter announcing this decision, Archbishop Hebda said that he made this decision on the advice of state officials, who warn that the next two weeks will be "critical for the containment of the COVID-19/coronavirus". The Archbishop hopes that the suspension of Masses over the next two weeks will help state and federal officials to prevent the further spread of the virus. In two weeks, the Archbishop will review the decision and provide guidance on how we can best continue our spiritual journey with Christ in light of this situation. You may view the Archbishop's full letter [here](#). For more information regarding the Archdiocese and Archbishop Hebda's response to the coronavirus outbreak, please visit the Archdiocese's official portal [here](#).

Courage, brothers and sisters! God does not lose battles. This time of the coronavirus is a blessing, because it makes us take our lives seriously, right down to the smallest actions, those that we might overlook in any other circumstance. Fear and worry do not come from the Lord, but they do make us remember that our lives are fragile and, for that reason, beautiful! In the light of death, we see the vibrant colors of life. Faced with eternity, our grumbling and complaining melts away. In our obsessive focus on the virus, there are far fewer distractions to our relationship with God.

Yes, brothers and sisters, let us pray for a brighter tomorrow, but let us not lose the opportunity of present! As Pope Saint John Paul II once said, "The future starts today, not tomorrow." The Lord still made this day, coronavirus or no coronavirus, and so has given us as valuable a moment as any to turn to Him and seek His protection.

Maybe you have no idea how to do this. No matter-- what is most important is your desire to live this with faith, which is a gift that God can give you. Start by asking God for faith. The faith to see this epidemic and panic from His point of view. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. We are his sheep. The good sheep follows its shepherd with complete trust-- it knows the rough ground it has to get across leads to better pasture, it knows that getting wet or tired or dirty will make it stronger. Then pour out your soul to the Lord. Tell Him how you are feeling, what makes you feel that way, and why. Then comes the most important part: listening. It is difficult to listen to God, because many times-- and I say this from experience-- we think we know better, or that God's plan gets in the way of our plan.

I am praying that the Lord helps me-- not just to have faith, but also to see that is the best thing that could have happened for our parish and our many ministries.

I pray also that you, dear parishioners, will join me in this.

It is true that, for now, Masses are suspended and we cannot gather in groups of more than ten. This does not stop the Church, or make its message any less important for the world. As Christians, we are called to announce the Good News that Christ has already died for our sins and destroyed death so that we can live forever with Him. Saint Archbishop Oscar Romero reminds us, "Each one of you has to be God's microphone... The church will always exist as long as there is someone who has been baptized... Where is your baptism? You are baptized in your professions, in the fields of workers, in the market. Wherever there is someone who has been baptized, that is where the church is. There is a prophet there. Let us not hide the talent that God gave us on the day of our baptism and let us truly live the beauty and responsibility of being a prophetic people."

Saint Bernard's is responding to the coronavirus by opening its doors and bringing Christ to the people of the North End. Here is our new schedule:

Mondays: 8:00-9:30 the church is open for personal prayer.

Tuesdays: 8:00-9:30 the church is open for personal prayer.

Wednesdays: 8:00-9:30 the church is open for personal prayer.

Thursdays: 8:00-9:30 the church is open for personal prayer.

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM the church is open for Adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Fridays: 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM the church is open for Adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

5:00 PM the church is open for Stations of the Cross (Via Crucis) in English.

6:00 PM the church is open for Stations of the Cross (Via Crucis) in Karenni.

7:00 PM the church is open for Stations of the Cross (Via Crucis) in Spanish.

Saturdays: 8:00-9:30 the church is open for personal prayer.

3:00 PM to 6:00 PM the church is open for personal prayer.

4:00 PM to 5:00 PM we will have Adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Sundays: 8:00-11:00 the Church is open for Adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

2:00 PM to 3:00 PM the church is open for Adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, in Spanish.

Note: the livestream of daily Mass will be every weekday day at 8:30 AM in English, on Saturday at 4:00 PM in English, and on Sunday at 12:00 PM in Spanish.

Throughout all this, we must comply with the Archbishop's guidelines for public meetings. That means you must sign up before coming to the church so that we can

ensure there are no more than ten people present so that we can protect your physical health in addition to your spiritual health. [Please sign up here](#). You do not have to sign up with your real name for the sake of anonymity, but if you sign up, please be sure to come in so that you do not take someone else's opportunity to come in. Please also remember to practice social distancing by sitting six feet away from the nearest parishioner. If you want to sign up but there is no more space, please contact me, and we will open the church at other times as well. We will post updated sign-up forms to our website a few days before the first day on the form.

I also invite you to visit our website, www.stbernardstpaul.org, to view our latest updates. You can also access our livestream channel from there. [Here is a direct link](#) to our livestream channel if you would like to bookmark it. You can also view archived videos there. Note, the livestream schedule of the Mass is above.

I will continue to communicate with you regarding any updates to our schedule and parish activities. The Season of Lent comes to help us prepare for Easter Sunday, when Christ rises from death. This coronavirus cannot stop us from preparing, and it certainly will not stop me and your devoted staff at Saint Bernard's from helping you to prepare well. I am concluding this email with the words Pope Saint John Paul II said when he was elected Pope because the anniversary of his death and birth to eternal life is coming up on April 2nd.

“I plead with you--never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire, and never become discouraged. **Be not afraid.**”

With you in Christ,
Father Ivan Sant
Pastor