

New Realities in the Time of the Coronavirus

My Dear Parish Family,

In today's (March 20) Gospel, Jesus says that the two greatest commandments are "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Normally, we know how to do these things, and we try to do them well. However, at this time, with the Coronavirus causing us to keep our distance from one another, the way we will show our love for God and others may have to change. I know that if we work together and if we find some creative ways to stay connected, our community of faith – our parish family – can lead the way in showing what it means to be true disciples of Christ.

Let me explain our current realities and how we might make adjustments:

Communion and Other Sacraments

As you have probably heard by now, the Bishops of Florida have decided, with the utmost care and prudence, that we will no longer be able to celebrate public Masses. This is true of all the Dioceses of Florida, as well as most Dioceses in the United States. In addition, the Churches will not be open to private visits by the faithful. [Please see Bishop Barbarito's statement [here](#).]

However, all scheduled Masses will still take place as private Masses celebrated by the priests of our parish. If you have asked for a Mass intention, please be assured that a priest is praying a Mass for that specified intention. Also, please know that all Masses you will be remembered at all Masses that are prayed. In addition, because God is outside of time and space, even if you cannot be physically present at Mass, your prayers will join with the prayers of the priest who is celebrating that Mass.

The Mass is available on television. You can watch the Diocesan TV Mass at 10:30 AM each Sunday on local channel CW34. You may also wish to check out the listings for Masses on EWTN. [Please check [here](#) for online and televised Masses.]

Your parish is currently working on having Masses available online, as we expect that they will be available within the next few days. We will let you know as soon as everything is in place for you to participate (virtually) in the Masses that are being celebrated at YOUR Church.

For times such as this, when we cannot receive the Holy Eucharist, the Church encourages a Spiritual Communion. This would include watching the Mass on TV or online, perhaps reading the readings for the Mass on your own, and praying a Prayer of Spiritual Communion, which can be found on the Diocese website [here](#).

Also, out of concern for the safety of our parishioners and our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, we are unable to bring the Eucharist to the homebound. However, the people in this ministry love what they do and I believe that they will try to keep contact with our homebound in some way, such as by telephone.

Priests will be available for Anointing of the Sick and Last Rites, especially in the cases of emergency. Also, priests will be available for confession by appointment only at this time.

Parish Office

The Parish Office will remain open for our regular business hours at this time. Those hours are M-F 9 AM to 5 PM and Sat & Sun. 9 AM to 1 PM. You may call or visit the office during those times. As mentioned above, if you have an emergency need for a priest, please feel free to call anytime.

Religious Shop

Our religious shop will be open in St. Joseph Hall Monday through Saturday, 10 AM – 1 PM. Stop by and get books and religious articles for your private devotion and study.

Ministries and Facilities

In order to respect the CDC guidelines and our Diocesan directives, all ministry meetings, including Knights of Columbus, Columbiettes, Prayer groups, and Bible studies have been cancelled until further notice.

Religious Education

While all of our in-class instruction has been cancelled until further notice, we are encouraging our students and their families to use this time for home study, especially those who are preparing for the Sacraments of Communion and Confirmation. Enrolled families will be contacted by the teachers and/or the director with more information.

Outreach Ministries

Great News! All of our Outreach Ministries, such as our ministry to the poor, Van Ministry, St. Vincent de Paul and our Food Distribution, will continue to the best of our abilities, respecting the new protocols and directives. At a time like this, there will be great need. If you would like to help us continue these valuable ministries of love for our neighbor, please contact the Parish Office.

Keep in Touch With YOUR Parish Family

Please know that you are always part of our family, and we want you to feel connected to your parish family. You can stay up to date on the parish by checking out our website [paulcross.org] and reading our bulletin [paulcross.org/bulletins]. You can also visit us on social media through our Facebook account @paulcrossNPB or follow this [link](#). As mentioned above, we will soon have our YouTube channel active for Masses and other useful information to keep you connected to the parish.

We also want to encourage you to stay connected to one another, especially if you know someone who might be alone. This can be a very anxious time for many people, and hearing from a friend can make all the difference.

Please also consider online donations. We will do all that we can to keep our parish going, and we ask that you help us in that effort. Online donations are safe and they are consistent. You can register for online giving by clicking on the button on our homepage or at the following location: www.osvonlinegiving.com/

Please know that you are always in the prayers of the clergy and staff of St. Paul of the Cross, and we ask for your prayers too. We are a community; we are a family; we are St. Paul of the Cross.

May God bless you, your family and the Parish Family of St. Paul of the Cross,

Fr. Tom