

Helping Others Get Through the Coronavirus

My Dear Parish Family,

A little over one month ago, I wrote to you about the changes that our parish would have to go through because of the coronavirus pandemic. In that email, I quoted from the Gospel passage of that day (March 20) where 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.” I also mentioned that “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.”

Well, I think that we’ve been doing pretty well in trying to stay connected – to God and one another. Recently our readings from the Acts of the Apostles have challenged us to help one another and to especially help those in need. “There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.” [Acts 4:34-35] During my homily from Tuesday, April 21, I reflected on how this passage about the original Church might inspire us, the modern Church, to have special consideration for and reach out in a special way to those in particular need today.

If you have paid any attention to the news today, you are aware that the coronavirus has dramatically affected the service industries, such as restaurants and retail workers. Our parish has come up with two ways that we can help these groups and anyone who is out of work from this pandemic. We are calling the two ministries: **Stimulus for Service** and **High Five for Workers**. Let me explain them.

Stimulus for Service

Recently, a very generous parishioner approached me and said, “Father Tom, I am so blessed and I don’t need the stimulus check that I just received. However, I know that there are people in need that could use this money, but I don’t know who they are or how to reach them. Do you think that the parish could help?”

This question inspired me in two ways: First, I thought, “I don’t need my stimulus check either and maybe I should donate mine too.” Then, I thought, “What if a number of people gave some or all of their stimulus checks? What kind of difference could we make?”

So here’s the program: If you donate to St. Paul of the Cross for “Stimulus for Service”, we will use the money in two ways:

1. If someone with a legitimate need for living expenses, such as rent or utilities, comes to the office, we will work with the St. Vincent de Paul Society to help even more than we might not normally be able to do.
2. We will purchase a number of gift cards for food that can be distributed to those in need.

You may donate by sending in a check (write Stimulus for Service in the memo), by calling the office with a donation by credit card, or through our online donations portal. You can donate online by clicking on the button on our homepage or at the following location: www.osvonlinegiving.com/611. Simply choose the category “Donation, Special Intention”, then choose “One time” and type Stimulus for Service in the box.

High Five for Workers

Friday, May 1st is the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. On that day, we would like to give a bag of groceries to people who normally are working, who want to be working, and who are unable to work right now. There are five items that can be staples of sustenance for someone in need. These five items are:

1. Cereal
2. Canned Meat
3. Soup, Rice or Pasta
4. Peanut Butter
5. Canned Vegetables, Fruit, or Beans

If you can donate these items or any combination of them to St. Paul of the Cross, we will make bags for the “Workers”. The idea will be to have drive-by donations from Monday through Thursday (April 27-30), and a drive-by distribution on Friday (May 1). No one will have to get out of their cars. Just hand us your donation (or open your trunk and we’ll get it from there) and we’ll make sure it gets to someone in need.

We know that trips to the grocery store are less frequent and more hurried than usual during this pandemic. So if you can just add these five items to your list, it’ll be quick and easy for you and very helpful for the “workers” in need. Also, if you’d prefer, you can order these items and have them delivered to the Parish Office. (Please ensure that they will arrive by Thursday.)

You can stay up to date on these ministries 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](#) and by announcements on our YouTube channel [St Paul of the Cross NPB](#).

These two ministries will help us “lead the way in showing what it means to be true disciples of Christ.” We are a community; we are a family; we are St. Paul of the Cross.

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

Fr. Tom