

To the families of Holy Name, Our Lady of the Pines and St Edmunds;

Peace be with you! We began our Lenten journey going into the desert with Jesus who was being led by the spirit. The desert is a place of testing and trial, a place of purification. If there is something we have all experienced this Lent it is this. Fear seems to be swirling around us all, yet we realize that it was in the desert Jesus conquers all temptations. In the desert he is strengthened by the Holy Spirit. In the desert God sends his angels to minister to him. What He did for Jesus He does for us.

On Ash Wednesday, I shared with you that Lent is a season of opportunity, a season of great grace. What I failed to mention is that this opportunity, this grace only comes to us through the cross, through Jesus passion and death. The cross is what we all are experiencing. There is no greater suffering for us Catholics than to be deprived of the gift of the Eucharist. It is as the Bishop said, the source and summit of our life. We also know that God never leaves us just as He never left his people who were in the desert. For 40 years He fed them and gave them water from the rock. For 40 years He guided them and led them like the Good Shepherd. So too, He continues to feed us and to quench our thirst for Him as we travel in this desert for 40 days.

I want to encourage each of you to continue that journey we began over three weeks ago. We have several more weeks to go. While Mass is not possible at the present moment, we do have those three gifts that Our Lord gave us as we began this journey. The gifts of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. It is the spirit who has led us out into the desert to transform each of us and He often does it through these gifts.

Fasting: I encourage all to continue to practice those acts of self-denial but to offer them for those who have been afflicted with suffering from illness and sickness, especially those afflicted with the virus. Fast from grumbling and complaining and feast on thanksgiving and hope. Share that hope with all.

Prayer: Mass is the highest and most perfect form of prayer. Since Mass is not possible at this moment, we can still attend Mass on TV on Sunday. We could watch the Mass at 9am on ABC, or 6am, 10am or 10pm on EWTN and at communion time, make a spiritual communion. Magnificat, a publication that gives us the readings of the Mass and some nice reflections is being offered for free online at www.magnificat.com/free

A second form of prayer is the Rosary. I know we cannot come together as a large group on Sunday, but we can, at the time we would have gone to Mass, pray the Rosary in our family homes. So if you normally go to Mass at 8am, you could

pray as a family the Rosary at 8am and then watch Mass on TV at 9am. Therefore at least we are spiritually connected as one family at those times.

Thirdly, perhaps we take the Month of April's prayer that St. Teresa of Avila composed and pray it every day:

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away
God never changes
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing.
God alone suffices.

Almsgiving: The third gift Our Lord offers us in Lent is the call to serve, to give and not to get. Reaching out to those isolated, especially our home-bound and elderly, to accompany them in little ways whether that is calling them to talk to them or to pick up things they might need so they do not have to go out or simply bring one of your favorite dishes to them. When so many are thinking only about themselves, may the Lord use us as a light in the desert that brings hope.

Fr. Clark, the staff at Holy Name and I want you to know we will continue to pray for all of you and are here for you in any way. We hope to have more updates and more direction in the coming weeks. When we receive any new directives and updates, we will post them on our web page, Facebook and our Parish App. If you are not able to access these, please call the office or a friend that can help you remain informed. The moment we learn of when Mass will resume, we will be sure to let you know. May St. Joseph, the guardian and protector of the Holy Family guide you and lead you through the remainder of your Lenten Journey.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
Fr. Glenn