



Welcome to Opening Doors!

I. *Did You Know?*

“We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other.”

- Pope Francis, Meditation during Urbi Et Orbi Blessing. Friday, March 27th, 2020.

Prayer During an Epidemic

Lord Jesus, Hear our pleas, our good shepherd and divine physician. We implore your mercy in the wake of an outbreak of serious illness and disease. Guide our efforts to prevent contagion and make preparations to care for those most vulnerable. Assist all professionals and volunteers who work to eradicate the epidemic now spreading. May our actions be marked by your steadfast love and selfless service and never by panic or fear. Bestow your comfort and healing to the sick, sustain and strengthen them by your grace. May they know your closeness as they carry the cross of illness. And may all you have called from this life come to worship you eternally with all the saints as you grant consolation and peace to their mourners. Amen. Holy Mary, Health of the Sick, pray for us. St. Joseph, Hope of the Sick, pray for us. St. Rocco, protector against epidemics, pray for us.

OurSundayVisitor.com

Special COVID resources and experiences:

So much has changed in such a short period of time. All of us are experiencing our quarantine or social distancing in different ways. *Opening Doors* is providing some resources available for people with special needs during this challenging time.

A personal experience from a person with a disability and social distancing: I had a WONDERFUL experience with my first "drive-thru confession!" at Divine Mercy parish in Kenner! I went with my mom driving me on the Saturday before Easter. Either you could stay in your car, or there was a chair placed about 6 feet away from the priest. There was also a kneeler there but I did not pay any attention to it because I would not attempt to kneel with my balance challenges while talking and using my brain for other things!

My mom simply got back into the car after getting my walker and turned up the radio. She could not hear me at all! But my experience got me thinking though. As you know, things change daily with new findings about Covid 19. Nobody really knows any "absolutes". As the virus started to affect people in our local community, I became even more cautious. Now with circumstances like this, I just accepted the driving limitations of my disability.

As I have mentioned, my parents are my primary caregivers so I definitely don't want to put them at risk. They are each over 70 and my dad and stepmom see an MD for coughing and lung issues already. So I found myself relying on my daughter who is in quarantine with me. The week after Easter, Divine Mercy Parish offered something for the parishioners every day of the week. Some days it was prayers and blessings with various relics or it might have been confession. I was unable to take part in any of it. It boils down to a person's activities being decided by another. Of course, I started thinking of my personal situation as I age. But then I began to realize that this is occurring already to thousands of others with disabilities or the elderly in nursing homes.

Yes, I understand that my daughter still has to do school work daily as a student at USM. I also understand her priorities are different from mine. Her free time may be spent differently. These are all things I am "seeing@differently. I guess God is opening my eyes during these times!

I also see and am SO excited about:

Workplace accommodations and flexibility. People with disabilities and chronic illnesses regularly struggle to carve out flexible work arrangements, including reasonable accommodations and telecommuting. Such measures are now being looked at in a different light by many employers, in response to a problem affecting all workers, not just those with disabilities and ongoing health conditions.

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Five Things to Know about Coronavirus and People with Disabilities: The COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak has everyone spooked, and hopefully, taking steps to control the outbreak and prepare to get through whatever may come of it. But one group faces additional risks and consequences, as well as anxieties: people with disabilities and or chronic illnesses.

Here are five points to keep in mind about how the coronavirus outbreak affects disabled people:

1. The people most often cited as being at serious risk are largely, by some definition, people with disabilities.
2. It can be harder for disabled people to take prudent steps to protect themselves from the coronavirus outbreak.
3. COVID-19 coronavirus threatens not only disabled people's health, but their independence.
4. This outbreak has the potential to add new perspectives and urgency to a number of long-time disability issues.
5. You can help a lot just being aware and sensitive to the specific risks and obstacles faced by disabled people in an outbreak of contagious illness like COVID-19.

You can access the full article and more information by clicking the link below.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewpulrang/2020/03/08/5-things-to-know-about-coronavirus-and-people-with-disabilities/#13dfc8d41d21>

NCPD (National Catholic Partnership on People with Disabilities): The NCPD has so much information to help people with disabilities navigate through Covid-19. The list includes information on:

- Medical Treatments for people with disabilities
- An extensive list of resources for all disabilities and caregivers -including where to find Mass online using sign language
- Free Faith Formation with e-books

Click on the link to access this information <https://ncpd.org/pandemic>

Exceptional Lives- Disability Information for Families: Please read the attached link entitled *Resources for Home-bound Families of Kids with Special Needs*.

<https://www.exceptionallives.org/home-with-kids>

Social Story to explain Covid-19 from Family Helping Families of Greater New Orleans site.

Click on the link below

<https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plain-Language-Information-on-Coronavirus.pdf>

Louisiana's Emergency Election Temporary Plan for July 11 and August 15, 2020 Elections:

After working with the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, chairmen of both House and Senate committees, as well as the Attorney General, we believe this temporary plan to be the best path forward to ensure voter access and maintenance of integrity and security in our election process.

- Emergency COVID-19 related excuse absentee-by-mail applications: For Louisiana voters affected by or concerned with the spread of COVID-19, a temporary, emergency application would allow those voters to receive an absentee ballot for the July and/or August elections. This plan covers five COVID-19 related excuses, drawn from CDC guidelines or federal legislation: those at higher risk for COVID-19 due to CDC-identified underlying health issues; those subject to medically necessary quarantines or isolation orders; those advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine; those experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking diagnosis; those caring for certain individuals. Further, this plan requires a witness signature on the absentee ballot envelope flap.
- Expansion of in-person early voting: While maintaining the same voter ID requirements under current law, in-person early voting would be expanded from seven days to thirteen days to ensure maximum capability for social distancing. This includes three Saturdays of early voting for the July 11, 2020 and August 15, 2020 elections.
- Change of polling location for some voters: For voters who normally vote at polling locations associated with Louisiana's senior population across several parishes, the polling place will be moved to a new location for the July and August elections. Voters affected by this change will be notified in a timely manner.
- Heightened precautions at in-person voting locations: For those who choose to take advantage of in-person voting, either during early voting or on election day, we are taking extra precautions to ensure the health and safety of polling commissioners and voters. This includes maintaining social distancing guidelines, offering hand sanitizer to voters, and distributing masks and gloves to polling commissioners.

For more information on what steps we are taking to conduct honest and fair elections during this pandemic, or to find out how you can vote in the July 11, 2020 and August 15, 2020 elections, head to GeauxVote.com

II. *What's Happening!*

- ***Mass for God's Special Children***, their families and friends is held every month at 2:00 p.m. at St Francis Xavier Church, 444 Metairie Road, Metairie, LA on the following dates

The following is our schedule of Masses for 2020* **-(Tentative to when public Masses are allowed again.)**

June 7

July 12

August 2

September 13

October - Anniversary Mass - date to be announced.

November 1

December 6

- Autism Society of GNO

The Autism Society of Greater New Orleans is dedicated to improving the lives of all affected by autism. To further this mission during the global crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, ASGNO is offering a variety of virtual programs and resources aimed to decrease feelings of isolation, boredom, and stress for the families in our area. We are working diligently to expand what we are able to offer during this time, so check back frequently! Our current offerings include our Virtual Dinner Party for Adults with Autism, our Virtual Parent Support Group, and our Social Media Resource Schedule!

Social Group for Adults with Autism weekly on Thursdays in May at 7:00 pm.

Virtual Parent Support Group every other Tuesday at 4:00 pm.

ASGNO Virtual programs offered can be accessed by clicking this link:

<http://www.asgno.org/asgno-covid-19-programs/>

- **Social and Fellowship** ****suspended until public gatherings are allowed again.

Third Saturday of every month @ 1:00 PM

Piccadilly Cafeteria located in the Clearview Palms Shopping Center, 2222 Clearview Parkway, Suite 107, Metairie, LA, 70001

Contacts Kristen Cipriani (504)723-5601 or Carol Burke (504)577-1415



III. Question Corner

If I have Hardship or Medical Problems, how do I request Door Delivery?

From the USPS-How to request door delivery due to a medical condition when your mailbox is on the curb or street. "Hardship" or "Medical Problems" is defined as an illness or handicap which would present a physical challenge for an individual to retrieve mail.

To request door delivery, you need to write a letter requesting this change and attach a statement from a Doctor. The doctor's statement should indicate you are unable to collect your mail from a curb or centralized mailbox. Both your letter and the doctor's statement must be sent to the Post Office™ that delivers your mail for approval or denial. Final determination on whether or not door delivery will be granted will be made by the Post Office.

**Request letters should be addressed to: POSTMASTER
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
<YOUR CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE>**

Note: Any approval may be temporary, for more information click the link below
<https://faq.usps.com/s/article/If-I-have-Hardship-or-Medical-Problems-how-do-I-request-Door-Delivery>

We welcome and encourage you to share any information or questions or you would like to see in Opening Doors e-Newsletter to klivauda@bellsouth.net. Please use Opening Doors in the subject line. We encourage you to share *Opening Doors* with your parish by publishing info in your church bulletins.