

Dear Parishioners,

As I shared in my homily for the 3rd Sunday of Lent, we are certainly in unprecedented times with this communal health crisis and the Archdiocese was providing directives to protect the health of those who are in the high-risk group. Within 24 hours, an updated announcement that from March 17 to April 14, Masses will be canceled in the Archdiocese of Portland which includes the solemn celebration of the Triduum and Easter. Like many, if not all, this was disheartening news.

I want to express my gratitude of the many texts, e-mails, and phone calls that I received offering support and encouragement. I apologize for not having more inspiring words to say as I still needed some time in prayer and reflection to process the information and sort out the varied emotions.

This morning while following my regular routine of praying over the Sacred Scriptures (good habits are hard to break), the words from the Prophet Daniel in the first reading for Tuesday in the 3rd Week of Lent captured my emotions:

We have in our day no prince, prophet, or leader, no burnt offering, sacrifice, oblation, or incense, no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you (Daniel 3:38).

There is a great absence and void of not being able to gather together as a community and family celebrating the greatest form of prayer, the Eucharist, during this imposed hiatus. However, although we may not be physically together in a sacred space, that does not mean that in the next 4 weeks we cannot still be united spiritually in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

The parishes will be open for you to drop in and pray daily. Visitation and St. Francis of Assisi from 9am to 5pm and St. Edward 9am to 1pm. Furthermore, St. Francis of Assisi will still be offering Eucharistic Adoration on Wednesday as well as St. Edward the 1st Wednesday of the month. Sanitizing wipes will be made available so you can disinfect your area before you depart. Please join me as I will be praying a rosary for the intention of healing and relief from COVID-19 daily.

The Archdiocese will be live streaming Sunday Mass at 11am as well as daily Masses at the chapel in the Pastoral Center. You can go either directly to the Archdiocesan website www.archdpdx.org or to any three of our parish websites: www.visitationfg.org or www.stewardnp.org or www.sfaroyparish.org. There will be a link directing you to the Archdiocesan website. This is a great way to participate in a spiritual communion.

I am available for confessions by appointment. Please reach out to me at either 971-217-5335 with a text or call or email: mvuvuky@yahoo.com to arrange for an individual private meeting.

Finally, I realize it is a great temptation to pass the time on Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, or any other streaming platform. I invite you to seriously consider fasting from this activity since the “soft” quarantine measures are limiting our social connections so it would seem that we need more social time and interaction with family by praying the rosary, playing a board game or visiting with each other. Perhaps, we can even do an act of almsgiving of our time by calling up, reaching

out, and checking up on family, parishioners, neighbors and those in our local community who are shut in their home for their own health and well-being.

For weekly offertory, Joyce Vanderzanden (Verboort) and Fran Avery (North Plains), if you mail your envelopes or you may access the Visitation or St. Edward website, select the “Donate” tab and indicate it is for the parish for offertory, we can continue to process your financial support.

My prayers are with all of you during these challenging times.

~Fr. Michael
22 March 2020