

A Message from Fr. Mark

"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul." (3 John 1:2)

There are some significant developments in response to the virus outbreak we want to share with all the members of St. Faustina and Holy Family parishes.

Practical Changes:

On Monday, the Bishops of Wisconsin **discontinued all public Masses** (Sunday and weekday) and most public church gatherings, **tentatively through April 3rd**. That was a hard choice to make, but we know now that it could, in fact, save a lot of lives. This will include Stations and Bible Studies.

Even so, we intend to keep **Churches open** for people to come and pray. St. Mary's in Pardeeville will be open as usual. Starting immediately, St. Joseph in Markesan will be open from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm every day.

Responding in Faith:

Not being able to celebrate the Holy Mass in common is a big deal, but we are not deprived of God's grace. Here's what we can and should do to respond to these troubles in faith.

1.) Make a Spiritual Communion every day.

Even if you can't attend a Mass, that doesn't mean the Mass isn't happening. Masses will be celebrated in our Parish every day, and you can join that prayer and receive powerful graces. Here is the traditional **Act of Spiritual Communion**:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

2.) Pray for Protection and Healing

Just because we can't pray side by side doesn't mean we can't pray together. I'm going to ask you all to join me in praying a **Novena to St. Raphael, beginning Thursday the 19th** on the Feast of St. Joseph and ending on the Friday before Palm Sunday. St. Raphael the Archangel is the patron of our Diocese and his name mean *God Heals*. We will post the prayers for this Novena on our website and in the Bulletin.

3.) Works of Mercy

The precautions we're told to make are reasonable, but we can still perform acts of Charity, and there will probably be greater need. Ask around about who needs help. Our Mobile Food Pantry, **Second Harvest**,

will still take place on **Monday the 23rd**. We may need to box food ahead of time, which means we need more help. If you're healthy please join us to get food to people most in need.

Impact on Our Lives and our Parish:

We don't know exactly what kind of an impact all this will have on our lives. Even so, there is very likely to be economic impact: people getting laid off; maybe some businesses closing. To respond in faith, to live like disciples of Jesus Christ, we're going to have to take responsibility for helping those of us hit hardest – *really helping them*.

Because some people are going to be hit hard, we expect they won't be able to contribute in the same way financially to the parish. We have to look out for them first. But to keep our Parish operational until we're through these outbreak troubles, we'll ask that you to continue Church offertory by mail, or if you prefer, drop off envelopes at the parish office.

If you know of someone who's sick, let me know right away so I can at least reach out to them.

We really should do what we can to slow the spread of the virus. The bible says listen to doctors. *"And give the physician his place, for the Lord created him; let him not leave you, for there is need of him. There is a time when success lies in the hands of physicians, for they too will pray to the Lord."* (Sirach 38:12-13)

Even more importantly, hold fast to you Faith in Jesus Christ, and God's provision for us in our need. This Season of Lent will be more penitential than we expected, but that can mean even greater graces, and a great union with Jesus in his sacrificial love from the cross.

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

Christ's Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Mark Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Mark Miller,
Pastor, St. Faustina Parish & Holy Family Parish