

# Shrine of the Sacred Heart Parish

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22 March 2020

Dear Parishioners and friends:

## **PREPARING FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SUNDAY**

Today is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent or Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday, taken from Isaiah 66.10:

**“Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all you who love her;  
Exult, exult with her, all you who were mourning over her!”**

This passage sets the tone for a joyful, confident and faith filled participation in the Easter mystery. As we are doing every single day, the Capuchins brothers and Fr. Luc Philigen will be gathering at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart to offer the One Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for each one of you and for your intentions. We are especially praying for the sick, the elderly and those unable to leave their homes. We are remembering those who have lost their jobs or are in danger of losing their jobs, and for those living with great fear and uncertainty. We are remembering the catechumens and those preparing for Sacraments at Easter.

Since today is “Rejoice Sunday,” with greater confidence we can share that we are ready to develop more lasting pastoral strategies into Holy Week and Easter. The parish staff will be meeting on Monday at 10 am to develop the broad strokes of our plan and we will be calling the various councils and committees to special “zoom meetings” or conference calls so that together we may create our new pastoral plan for the next few weeks.

By this time, most of us have searched and found some **spiritual resources** that have proven helpful. Many have written and shared what they have found on the internet or what they are doing to “rekindle the gift of God that is within” (2 Tim. 1-6) I would like to share with you some information as we wait to see how we might celebrate Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

Firstly, the Congregation for Divine Worship has issued a decree “In the time of COVID-19” with general guidelines for the celebration of the Holy Week and Easter. Each Diocese will soon publish more specific guidelines. This is the website of the actual text. You will have to scroll down to find the English version.

<http://www.cultodivino.va/content/cultodivino/it/documenti/decreti-general/decreti-general/2020/decreto-triduo-pasquale-2020.html>

In the meantime, Pope Francis has issued a new invitation for prayer:

**“We want to respond to the virus pandemic with the universality of prayer, compassion and tenderness. Let us stay united. I invite all Christians to direct their voices together towards Heaven, reciting the Our Father on Wednesday, 25 March at noon.”**

Secondly, in the midst of so many fine articles on how to live our faith during these times, I found this one written by Michelle Arnold, a catholic laywoman, entitled: **Living the Faith**

**Without the Sacraments.** <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/living-the-faith-without-the-sacraments>

Michelle presents and develops the following:

- Watch Mass on your computer or television
- Learn the Liturgy of the Hours
- Read Scriptures
- Make more regular Examination of Conscience
- Pray the Rosary and other classic devotions
- Through video conferencing join a Bible study group or spiritual reading group
- Wear your Sacramentals
- Create a do-it-yourself retreat
- Support the Church

Thirdly, you are invited to make a Virtual Retreat with Cardinal Sean O'Malley, ofmcap, entitled: **Christ, Our Light in the Darkness.** You may participate beginning tomorrow night, Monday March 23, 7pm ET, daily until Friday, March 27. <http://www.catholic.org/watch-live>

Finally, Cinnamon Sarver, the Director of Religious Education at Sacred Heart School shared the following portion of a homily given by St. Oscar Romero (Oct.8 1977), words which I've found appropriate at this time.

"Blessed are those who feel and live the crisis and who settle it with a commitment to our Lord. I am very glad that just at this moment of crisis many who were asleep have awakened and at least ask themselves where the truth is to be found. Look for it. St. Paul shows us the way: with prayer, with reflection, appreciating what is good. These are wonderful criteria. Wherever there is 'what is noble, what is good, what is right,' there is God. [Philippians 4:8] If, besides these natural good things, there is found grace, holiness, sacraments, the joy of a conscience divinized by God, there is God."

I'd like to thank especially Juan Somarriba and the generous volunteers that have maintained the Sacred Heart Dinner Program serving the poor and the needy throughout this week. Also a special thanks to those who continue to support the parish through Faith Direct and those who have stopped by to offer donations.

I'm looking forward to seeing what God has in store for us in the coming weeks!  
The parish office remains OPEN, we are here to serve you. God bless you.

Fr. Emilio Biosca Agüero, ofmcap  
Pastor