

ST. MARY OF THE LAKE PARISH
718 W. Buffalo St. + New Buffalo, MI 49117
(269) 469-2637
stmarynewbuffalo@gmail.com

August 24, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

Greetings from Fr. John Peter, MSFS! We live in extraordinary times as we confront the continued challenges of the pandemic around the world, the Diocese, and even our Parish. We have had to make many sacrifices, and so I want to express my sincerest gratitude to each of you for your prayers and for your continued support to all of our parish family. We know with prayer, and God's help, we will see his love and soon return to a more normal way of life.

I realize many of you cannot attend Mass at this time, so I want to offer a few different ways that you can stay in touch with our parish: 1) Watch our live stream Mass either on our parish website or the parish Facebook; 2) Visit our parish website at www.stmarynewbuffalo.org; 3) Download myParish App and select our parish; or 4) Receive our parish bulletin via email by visiting discovermass.com.

We will continue to have Mass outside as long as the weather permits. When the weather turns cooler, weekend Masses will move to the school gym/cafeteria. We can accommodate more people with the mandated social distancing requirements in that facility compared to how many we can have in our church. Daily Mass will continue to be celebrated in our church.

Each year we insert our parish financial statement in the bulletin. Since not everyone can attend Mass at this point, I am enclosing a copy for your review. Our Sunday and Holy Day contributions are down by almost \$20,000 this past fiscal year due to the COVID pandemic. Even though you may not be attending Mass in person, many of you continue to mail your contributions to the parish. I thank everyone for supporting our parish and ask for your continued support. Our parish does have online giving now. Simply go to our parish website at www.stmarynewbuffalo.org and click on the Online Giving tab.

I wanted you to be know that our Bishop's Annual Appeal will officially be launched the weekend of September 12th and 13th. The appeal has been delayed from this past spring due to the pandemic. Also, I want you to be aware of a significant change this year in the allocation of funds returning back to parishes as part of this appeal. Bishop Bradley has generously authorized a program that will assist us in meeting our parish expenses in a much greater way. After Parishes reach 50 percent of their goal, all gifts to the appeal beyond that will be returned directly to the parish; the Diocese has also slashed its own operating budget for this year in half. In a quote from Bishop Bradley, he states, "*this is a shared sacrifice we feel necessary to assist in securing financial stability for our parishes. We want every parish in our Diocese to remain vital centers of worship, faith formation and service to their local communities.*"

Our parish goal for this year is \$55,497. I am writing to you in advance to ask for you to prayerfully consider your generous contribution toward this year's appeal goal. The harsh reality we have faced during the pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented hardship to all parishes, but with the help of you and your fellow parishioners we will fulfill the bishop's wish and remain vital.

With the number of parishioners still not attending Mass, I will be encouraging the use of the online giving feature that is made available through the diocesan online giving website (<https://www.osvonlinegiving.com/867>). We ask that if you have any questions concerning this to please let us know.

Watch your mail for a letter from Bishop Bradley with an information piece explaining the appeal in more detail and the many helpful services it funds. It also will include your personalized pledge card to use in making your gift or pledge. You are encouraged to complete the pledge card and return it to the parish by mail or in the collection basket at Mass.

We have received permission from the bishop's office to proceed with our church cement project. The handicap ramp, front church steps, and the west basement stairs will be replaced in October. If you would like to contribute towards this project, please indicate "church cement project" on your check memo line and mail it to the parish office. The cost for this project will be \$34,000 plus the cost of replacing the handrails. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

If you are not able to attend Mass at this time, but would like me to bring you Holy Communion, please fill out the form below and return it to the parish office. I would be more than happy to bring communion to you. Also, if there is anything that you need or simply want to talk, please contact me at 269-469-2637.

I am grateful for all you do for our parish and pray that God continues to bless you and your loved ones in these most challenging times.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. John Peter, MSFS
Pastor

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE PARISH OFFICE: 718 W. Buffalo St., New Buffalo, MI 49117

_____ Yes, I would like Fr. John to bring me Holy Communion.

Preferred day & time: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Additional comments: _____
