

March 17, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

We are all familiar with the words from Sacred Scripture: "This is the day the Lord has made, Let us be glad and rejoice in it" (Psalm 118:24). As we all know, there is never a reason for us as Catholics, as followers of Christ, to not be glad and rejoice! We always have more blessings than not, even in the midst of the current medical and financial crisis. Coronavirus must become our opportunity to show ourselves, God and others who we are and why we count our blessings.

From a spiritual point of view, we might say that the Coronavirus has become our Lent this year which may also be spoken of as our cross. The cross, of course, is meaningless without the resurrection. But we as Catholics, as followers of Christ, also believe in the resurrection. In fact, we not only believe but we look forward to celebrating the great mystery of Jesus Christ risen from the dead. As followers, what Christ does, we do ... where Christ goes, we go!

It is within this context that we must view and even live with the Coronavirus. We must rise to the occasion by being people of charity, thinking not only of ourselves and our households but being attentive to our friends and neighbors as well.

One of the matters that I want to bring to your attention is your parish stewardship. To say it another way, our parish collections are down significantly. Please take time to mail your donation to the parish when you find a moment and/or continue your e-Giving. This is essential if we are going to keep two churches up and running once the Coronavirus is behind us. PLEASE don't forget!

Secondly, and more importantly, the only way we are going to put this whole matter of the Coronavirus behind us is by maintaining a regular daily prayer life. We are really in a "wartime" mode. All public Sunday and weekday Masses for the faithful have been cancelled with the exception of funerals, weddings and small private baptisms (as long as they follow the "crowd size" guidelines mandated by civil authorities). This will be re-evaluated by Bishop Checchio before the weekend of Palm Sunday. All other parish events and gatherings are likewise cancelled including Stations of the Cross. As always, emergency Anointing of the Sick and Confessions can be arranged by calling the parish office. PLEASE NOTE: During these troubling times I am praying the Mass everyday on your behalf. For your part, I ask that you make a Spiritual Communion at home so as to "mystically" unite ourselves to one another and to the official prayer of the Church. As well, I recommend the "Coronavirus: Prayer for Courage" written by Father Hillier. The Holy Rosary is also recommended for those who enjoy a Marian spirituality or the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

If circumstances warrant it, I will ask you to donate some of your extra items so they might be shared with those who have nothing. Such items may include: rubber gloves, disposable masks, disinfectant wipes and related items.

As we move along together in this national crisis, please remember the words printed on every currency: "In God We Trust". We trust that Almighty God will lead us through this and comfort us along the way.

In Christ Jesus Our Lord,

Rev. Msgr. Edward C. Puleo

An 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.

Coronavirus - Prayer for Courage

God our Loving Father, comforter of the afflicted,
watch over us always, but most especially at this,
our time of urgent need.

With heavy hearts we cry out to you ...
We ask that you heal those among us
weighed down with the coronavirus.

Inspire with your holy wisdom —
our health professionals: scientists, doctors,
and all medical personnel.
Show special attention to our government officials:
nationally, internationally, and local.
Make them instruments of your love
as they seek to serve your people.

Lord and Giver of Life, trusting in your mercy,
we recall the prayer of your prophet Jeremiah:
*"heal me, O Lord and I shall be healed;
save me, and I shall be saved"* (17:14).

When fearful, grant us courage.
When uncertain, strengthen us.
In our sorrow, comfort us.

With hearts overflowing with love for you,
we surrender ourselves to your providential care,
and ask only that you consider our sincere request
to remain steadfast in your love — charitable to all
and faithful first and foremost in doing
your holy will.

Through Christ Our Lord, Amen