

The Roman Catholic Parishes of Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, and South Portland, Maine

Dear Parishioners,

We are living through very unprecedented times. The Scripture passages from Deuteronomy 31:6 says:

“Be strong and steadfast; have no fear or dread of them, for it is the LORD, your God, who marches with you; he will never fail you or forsake you.”

How true that statement has been this last week. It is with the grace of God, we as a parish, have now set up ways for parishioners to participate in Mass with our priests and are able to pray the Stations of the Cross at one of our churches (soon to be all three). We plan to videotape and post the recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet at St. Maximilian Kolbe to assist you in your prayer. If you have ideas of ways, we can be community, please share them with us.

Holy Cross School has instituted online learning. The first week this new learning style, they had a couple of glitches. Those have been worked out and school is as normal as it can be expected. One parent reported that having Skype and a social chat experience has been very positive for her boys.

In order to unite us with our Catholic brothers and sisters around the world, we are asking that you stop whatever you are doing at 7PM and we all pray together the Prayer by Pope Francis to the Blessed Mother for Protection against Covid-19:

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick. At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need. We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

The Diocese sent this today: “unfortunately, ***Churches cannot remain open*** for the safety of all, especially the elderly, the sick, those with chronic health conditions and compromised immune systems. Given the current reality, it would not be possible (1) to secure fully the building, thus guaranteeing that reasonable safety measures are in place for those who enter/leave and pray there; and (2) to ensure that the building itself would be cleaned regularly and sanitized thoroughly during each period of use.”

Let us also remember that God is everywhere—in our backyards as we get fresh air and watch the birds; as we walk six feet apart on the beach (as long as they are open!) to enjoy the beauty of creation; or in a prayer space in our homes.

To create prayer spaces, find a comfortable quiet space your home. In that space include a chair and table on which you place e.g., a cross, a statue, saint cards, prayer cards, rosary beads, a bible and a candle. Whatever items help you focus on God. Go there when you need to pray.

If you have keys please refrain from using them until the Churches are open full time again. If you have a request or need please call Kris Benson 883-0334 ext. 227.

Reconciliation will be available March 28 and April 4 at:

SJHC at 3PM in the old sacristy

St Maximilian Kolbe at 4PM in the Reconciliation Room

There will be no reconciliation on Holy Saturday, April 11 in either church.

The Apostolic Penitentiary has stated that if it is impossible to receive sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness and a firm resolve to go to confession as soon as possible, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones. Perfect contrition requires:

The love of God

The sincere desire for forgiveness

The ardent commitment to receive the sacrament of reconciliation when available

In consultation with the CDC, the government, the Bishops councils, Bishop Deeley stated that **THE LIGHT IS ON FOR YOU HAS BEEN CANCELLED.**

Our Sunday Mass celebrations will be videotaped and put onto the website:

Sunday, March 29, 2020 will be posted by 5PM on March 28, 2020

Sunday, April 5, 2020 will be posted by 5PM on April 4, 2020

To participate virtually in Mass with Msgr Stefanko and Fr Innocent Okozi please go to **[Cluster22.org](https://www.Cluster22.org)**

We will be videotaping Holy Thursday, Good Friday, a modified Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday Morning. We will update you on the times those celebrations will be on our website.

Here is the Prayer for Spiritual Communion for your use at the time of communion

Prayer 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.

I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as it You have already come and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen

St Francis

Our video of the mass from the Fourth Sunday of Lent was a huge success. On Sunday evening we had over 375 views. The majority of our viewers were from South Portland, Cape Elizabeth and Scarborough, but some of our snowbirds from Florida and Georgia were able to join us in prayer. Msgr Stefanko and Fr. Innocent are grateful to all who reached out to them after the mass. Thank you to those of you who joined us in prayer.

If you need help getting groceries or medications, please contact Kris Benson 207-883-0334 ext. 227 or kris.benson@portlanddiocese.org. We have ten people eager to help.

Be safe and know you are in our prayers. Please pray for us as well.

Sincerely,



Msgr. Paul F. Stefanko