

The Roman Catholic Parishes of

Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, and South Portland, Maine

Dear Parishioners,

For many of us, this is the first time we have experienced a pandemic of this magnitude. We are blessed to have communication and updates on the news, social media, and through emails, which are all aimed at keeping us safe but can also develop in us anxiety and uncertainty. We are all experiencing many of these emotions in one way or another. We plan on communicating to you as situations arise not to enhance your fear but to help to reduce anxiety of the unknown. It is in these times we need to turn to prayer:

Compassionate and Loving Father,
In the face of confusion and concern impart to us the calm of Your presence.
In You allow us to find hope and healing.
Be with those who serve the sick and give them Your caring hands.
Be with those who lead and give them Your spirit of wisdom.
Be with those who have fallen ill and give them Your comforting heart.
Wrap Your arms around our world and hold us in Your love.
Allow us at this time of trial to then serve as instruments of that love to all we meet.
We ask this in Your Name. Amen

Some highlights from Bishop Deeley's letter to the churches of the Diocese of Portland. You can read them in entirety on our website:

1. "Bishop Robert P. Deeley is temporarily suspending all daily and Sunday Masses and religious services throughout the Diocese of Portland (covering the entire state of Maine), effective immediately. The bishop is also issuing a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass for Maine Catholics during this time."
2. "Please remember that your parish communities depend on the offertory collections and will need your support going forward to carry on the mission of the Church," said Bishop Deeley.
3. "I want to assure all of you that we, your priests, are spiritually united to you as each of us offers Mass each day," said Bishop Deeley. "Please remember that in a time that can instill fear and anxiety, we, as Catholics are guided by our faith in the peace that comes from the love that God shows us in Jesus, who comes to be with us,

to strengthen us from whatever weakness we may be experiencing or whatever illness may be afflicting us.

We as your parish community have also been exploring many different avenues to be present to you in these times of isolation.

1. In order to stay connected with all of you, each Sunday Mass will be video taped and posted to our website (cluster22.org) by 8AM Sunday morning. This will allow you to watch when it is convenient for you. Here is a prayer of Spiritual Communion that you can recite at the time of communion.

Prayer of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed 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

By St Francis of Assisi

We understand that the days ahead will be financially challenging for all us including the church. For those not on WeShare, our on-line giving program, we encourage you to go to our website and sign-up. Those using envelopes may drop them off or mail them to the cluster office at 150 Black Point Road, Scarborough 04074

2. We will be opening our churches for private prayer seven days a week beginning Friday, March 20th from 8AM to 2PM. We ask that you stay in the designated areas, i.e., the pews with the reserve signs and restrooms so that we can clean effectively and keep everyone safe.
3. Know that our priests will be saying private daily Masses. Therefore, the intention that has been assigned and stated in the bulletin will be prayed.
4. Reconciliation will still be available Saturdays at 3PM at St John & Holy Cross in the back sacristy to ensure social distancing. Reconciliation will be available Saturdays at 4PM at St Maximilian Kolbe Church in the reconciliation room.
5. The Light is On For You Reconciliation will be available at the scheduled times. See the bulletin for times and locations.
6. Remember we will still be publishing our bulletin and posting onto our website.
7. Staff are still working and can be reached via email and by phone.
8. We are putting together and posting Stations of the Cross and Recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet to our website for your ongoing prayer. You can expect them up by Thursday, March 26th.

9. Our baptismal team is holding a baptism preparation meeting tonight via Facebook messenger. We will explore social media platforms to continue to gather some groups.
10. Currently, we have gathered a list of three people willing to do outreach to the more vulnerable among us, delivering food or medication. If you would like to be added to that list or if you are someone who needs that kind of assistance, please contact Kris Benson 883-0334 ext 227 or kris.benson@portlanddiocese.org
11. Ways we all can be present to the elderly and isolated parishioners and still be safe ourselves:
 - a. Send cards to people in the nursing home letting them know that we have not forgotten them and care about them.
 - b. Another way to keep in touch is by calling people on the phone.

Due to the rapid change in communication please check out our website at www.cluster22.org for ongoing information and opportunities to grow in our faith. We also have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/C22Cparishes/>. We also plan on sending these cluster wide emails as information from the diocese arises.

Last week's information sessions held at each church were very informative. Each gathering had more than 20 individuals who came to ask some very important questions. The answers to those questions will be provided to you through our cluster wide emails as well.

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

Sincerely,

Msgr. Paul F. Stefanko