

Dear parishioners,

It has been five weeks since all public functions within our parish have been suspended. I am reaching out to simply share with you news and information pertaining to the life of our community.

- **All public liturgical celebrations in our church remain suspended until further notice.** Mass is celebrated privately on a regular basis. If you wish to have Mass offered for a particular intention, feel free to contact Terri King by phone or email.

The church remains open (parking lot entrance) during the daytime for private prayer. It is cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis. At this time, we strongly encourage the use of a mask when coming to church to pray. Paper copies of the bulletin as well as copies of the *Word Among Us* are available in the parking lot entrance foyer of the church.

- **The parish office** in the rectory remains closed to the general public. Terry King, Office Administrator, is available to conduct parish business by phone or email during office hours Mondays-Thursdays.

- **Deacon John Barton**, who has been ministering in our parish since last fall underwent surgery to remove his larynx and pharynx on March 24th. He is presently recuperating at home. Although presently unable to speak, John will soon be undergoing therapy to do so. He asks that we would pray for him as he continues to pray for us during this challenging time. If you wish to send him a card, his address is: 605 Browning Lane, Worcester, MA 01609. His email is: deaconjb09@yahoo.com.
- **Scott Camilleri** has joined our parish community as a deacon-intern. Scott previously worked for over 30 years on the Concord, MA police force and now teaches at St. Leo's Elementary School in Leominster. He and his wife Tracey reside in Clinton.
- **Sister Elaine Potvin** has retired from her position as Director of Religious Education. We thank her for her years of service. A search committee is being formed with a view to hiring a new director. The committee will work in collaboration with the Parish Council. Looking forward, it will be important that the search committee include individuals with backgrounds in education.
- Along with other public parish functions, **Religious Education** for the youth of our parish is suspended until the fall. The resumption of classes will be very much informed by whatever guidelines are

instituted by the public schools. In the meantime, we will look at ways at providing some kind of "at-home" catechesis so as to assure some continuity for our young people. Of particular concern are those preparing for First Communion and Confirmation. For the time being, those celebrations are postponed indefinitely. We will share information as soon as we have some clarity as to how to appropriately proceed.

- The **Parish Council** and **Parish Finance Council** continue to meet (with appropriate social distancing) to discuss issues pertaining to the life of the parish. Among the topics recently discussed has been the severe deterioration of the sidewalk and steps in the front of the church. Nonetheless, given the many uncertainties of the present crisis, it has been decided that those projects will need to be postponed.
- The **West Boylston Food Pantry** is no longer accepting donations of non-perishable food items. Mindful that the need is great, monetary or gift card donations are gratefully accepted. They may be dropped off at the parish office. Simply alert Terri King in the parish office beforehand.
- The **Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)**, **Visitation House** and **First Concern Resource Center** are all very much in need of diapers of

all sizes. If anyone is able to purchase any during a trip to the store, please call Mary Lacaire (508.410.2112) or Kim Fitzpatrick (774.318.0713) to arrange a convenient time to pick them up. Your help is much appreciated.

- The **Saint Vincent de Paul Society** of the parish helps those most in need especially with assistance with rent, food and medical bills. A reminder: the offering from the votive candles in church goes to support the charitable work of the SVD Society here in our community. Simply place the offering in the black offering boxes affixed to the wall near the candle stand.
- **Offertory** contributions may be mailed to Our Lady of Good Counsel, 111 Worcester St., West Boylston, MA 01583. We thank you for your support of the parish.
- We continue to use the **Flocknote** platform to communicate with our parishioners. If you know of someone who is not receiving parish news via Flocknote, please forward their name and email address to the parish office t.king@goodcounselma.com. We will assure that they are included. We also use **Facebook** to share news and information. If you are a Facebook user, please consider "liking" our **Our Lady of Good Counsel West Boylston** Facebook page. The parish bulletin appears on the parish website and is usually posted online on Friday. www.goodcounselma.com.

- If you are aware of a parishioner at risk of extreme isolation or you suspect in danger while home alone during this time of social distancing, please contact us by phone or email. All calls will remain confidential.
- We are in the midst of a crisis entailing great challenges, both medical, emotional and economic. So many are suffering. Nonetheless, we must continue to be apart at this time in order to protect the most vulnerable within our community. Among those in harm's way are those who care for the sick and those who provide essential services. Let's continue to pray for greater wisdom, patience and compassion. May our scientists and researchers be blessed with insight in providing effective treatments and cures. *We are all connected.* Our sacrifices today will bring about a greater good tomorrow. May God help us to be both loving and brave.

I wish you peace. And I thank you for being a part of our parish community.

Father Steven Labaire