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April 9, 2020

Dear parishioners of St. Patrick and St. Charles,

Greetings in Christ!

Despite our pandemic circumstances, these next several days are the most sacred of the entire year. Farmers are beginning to find fields dry enough to begin anhydrous ammonia application and spring tillage, but that's not what I'm referring to! It is what the Church calls the "Sacred Triduum," which means the sacred three days. It begins on the evening of Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord's Supper, continues through Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and concludes with the celebration of Mass on Easter morning.

I hope that these days are opportunities of prayer, silence, penance, and reading of Scripture. Seminarian Matt compiled a great guide for these days that can be easily found on our website, called "Holy Week at Home". During this time, there's nothing more important that we can do! Sometimes sacred music or sacred art can help us focus our attention on Our Lord's Passion and death, so do what you can! ***Due to several factors, we will not be filming Holy Thursday Mass, the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion on Friday, or the Easter Vigil on Saturday night.*** Instead, we have provided a link on our website to the liturgies being celebrated at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, which is the largest Catholic Church in North America and certainly one of the most beautiful. Of course, there are plenty of other livestreaming options, but that's the place we have suggested. On Friday morning, we will be posting another Stations of the Cross, as well as the Divine Mercy Chaplet. We hope those are a help to you. ***Easter Sunday Mass will be posted on our website by 7:00am on Sunday.***

No doubt you have many groups of people in your daily prayers: those suffering from the coronavirus, the medical workers who assist them, our government leaders making challenging decisions, the high school seniors who will not enjoy the typical events at the end of their school year, the athletes who must forfeit their seasons... ***but may I add some groups of people to your own personal, daily prayers?*** Please pray for those five individuals who will come into the Church this year at our parishes, but must wait indefinitely to receive the Sacraments for the very first time. Please pray for those couples who have prepared a beautiful wedding liturgy this spring, only to have it without the joy of their family and friends. Please pray for those married couples who anxiously await the baptism of their newborn child, but must be patient and endure the delay. Please pray for the nine students from our parishes who have prepared all year to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, only to have that great occasion postponed. And please pray for those second graders from our parishes who are anxiously awaiting their First Holy Communion! They are so eager, and yet they must wait, too.

And yes, ***please pray for your priest.*** I am doing fine! But I miss you all, and am doing everything I can to help you stay close to Our Lord Jesus.

May these days be filled with grace for you, and may you experience joy this Easter season that only comes with the conviction that Christ has conquered the grave.

Under the Mercy,  
Father Haan