

19 April 2020

Dear St. Charles Parishioner,

This is the Second Sunday of Easter, also called Divine Mercy Sunday. Our “stay at home” and “social distancing” expectations remain in force. And from every indication, our sacrifices and our inconveniences are paying off. Thanks to wise counsel and strong leadership in the State of Ohio—and the cooperation of Ohio citizens—our statewide infection rate remains low and lives are being saved. But we still have a long way to go. Perhaps the words of another great leader in perilous times, Winston Churchill, might apply to our current situation “it is not the beginning of the end; but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”

Father Lou Thomas was released from the hospital this week and has continued his recuperation with family. We speak or text daily and Fr Lou thanks you for your continued concern and prayers. We hope to welcome him back to the parish within a few weeks.

Thank you to those who focused in on my “crock pot” comment two weeks ago. I've received several “favorite recipes” sent to my attention. I am getting a little daring and starting to concoct my own creations and adding my own ingredients. No one has turned his nose up yet!

Two weeks ago I asked for your financial help and the result was most gratifying. Thank you for your prompt response and for your great generosity. Here's the offertory report for the five weeks we've been on “lockdown:”

March 15:	\$19,311.75
March 22:	\$10,845.35
March 29:	\$16,149.42
Palm Sunday April 5:	\$52,656.93
Easter Sunday April 12:	\$81,915.21

I am not sure what the future holds, in terms of State of Ohio guidelines, as to when we will be permitted to resume public Masses. In the meantime, I ask for your continued financial support by way of the mail, Parish Office drop-off (in the “key return slot” to the right of the Office entrance) or by way of on-line giving –go to <http://www.stcharlesonline.org/> and scroll down on the right to ONLINE GIVING.

A faithful and devoted St Charles parishioner included this timely and appropriate reflection in an Easter card. It makes a clear connection between our world today and the Easter experience of the Apostles:

The Very First Easter

The Very First Easter was not in a crowded worship space with singing and praising. On the Very First Easter, the disciples were locked in their house. It was dangerous for them to come out. They were afraid. They wanted to believe the good news they heard from the women, that Jesus had risen. But it seemed too good to be true. They were living in a time of such despair and such fear. If they left their homes their lives and the lives of their loved ones might be at risk. Could a miracle have really happened? Could life really have won out over death? Could this time of terror and fear really be coming to an end?

Alone in their homes, they dared to believe that hope was possible, that the long night was over and that morning had broken, that God's love was the most powerful of all, even though it did not seem quite real yet. Eventually, they were able to leave their homes, when the fear and danger had subsided, they went around celebrating and spreading the good news that Jesus had risen and that love was the most powerful force on earth.

This year, we experience a taste of what that Very First Easter was like, still in our homes daring to believe that hope is on the horizon, Then, after a while, when it is safe for all people, when it is the most loving choice, we will come out, gather together, and sing and shout the good news that God brings life, even out of death, and that love always has the final say!

This year we just might get the clearest understanding of just what that Very First Easter was like!