

April 1, 2020

Dear Friends.

How are you holding up? I think about you so often each day. I miss you very much.

My Mom died twenty-nine years ago today. I offered my private Mass, already scheduled for her, this morning before I went to the Office. Like so many moms she would make Chicken soup whenever it was either really cold or someone in the family was sick. It always helped to make things better.

Well, if the world's great doctors haven't found a cure for the Coronavirus by Monday they should come down here because I just came back from eating a homemade Chicken soup that Father Lino made that should cure the whole world. Man, that priest can cook (and clean). My version of homemade Chicken soup (and Father knows this) is to open a traditional can of Campbell soup, with an old fashioned can opener, and cook it slowly on the stove, the way God intended. Forget those new fangled pull-tab cans and microwaves. Thank you, Father Lino, and God bless you.

I am writing to all of you again today to let you know what our Parish Schedule will look like in the days to come. Everything that I scheduled in my letter of March 20, 2020 will remain the same. In that letter I indicated that a new schedule would be forthcoming for April 5<sup>th</sup> and beyond. I am sending that new schedule with this letter as an attachment. It includes the last two days, Friday and Saturday, April 3 and 4, for your convenience.

By now we all know that a significant part of everyone's "new normal" is that everything is different now. Please keep that in mind as you read the Holy Week schedule.

I composed it after reviewing the instructions that Bishop Burbidge outlined for all parishes, after living and experiencing the previous schedule with you and Father Lino, and after consulting Father Lino and our parish staff about it several times.

As I pass this new schedule on to you keep in mind that, as we have been doing since Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, you may only enter the church through the front doors. In addition, I ask you kindly to remember that there should be no more than 10 people in the church at any one time, so please be mindful of people waiting outside the church for a turn to come inside to pray.

As CNN anchor Chris Cuomo, who contracted the Coronavirus has said, "*We have to do everything we can to avoid being sick.*"

That reminds me now of Deuteronomy 6:5: *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.* How fondly I remember now with a smile how whenever Father Dubay quoted this verse he always added, "and *all* means *all*."

Imitating Father Dubay now, I would add when quoting Mr. Cuomo that “*we*” means “*all of us*” and “*everything*” means “*everything.*” Remember, as Mr. Cuomo reminds us once again, we are all “fighting something that we don’t really understand.”

In closing I remember something else Father Dubay said to me, only once, but once was enough. After meeting with him one day he said, “Father, you have a tremendous need to understand. But surely, you know by now, that the more you understand, the more you realize you don’t understand.” I didn’t know that then. I understand it *now*.

And *now*, I send you my blessing, with this letter and attachment, once again, “through the air.”

With kindest regards and prayers for you at every Mass each day, I remain,

Your very grateful pastor,

Father DeMartino