

## ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC PARISH

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HAPPY EASTER! HE IS RISEN!

Remember how Fr. Michael would run around the parking lot, yelling “HE IS RISEN!”? Imagine that now. Even though we are not together celebrating in our churches, we can still celebrate and proclaim “He is Risen” in our homes...the domestic church. We truly are all missing our church community and traditions but they do live in our hearts too and the liturgy continues and Easter still comes, so be joyful in that (and maybe some new traditions will be born from forced innovation). Let us find joy in the parts of life that just might be a bit better due to our confinement. It is okay to find some beauty and light in this journey and suffering. Christ, the Risen Lord taught us to do that! Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3-7:

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. For as Christ’s sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow. If we are afflicted, it is for your encouragement and salvation; if we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement, which enables you to endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is firm, for we know that as you share in the sufferings, you also share in the encouragement.”*

So, although we share in the suffering of our nation and world and we should be in solidarity, we should also offer prayer, and encouragement to others. However, in order to encourage others, we must see joy and beauty in this challenging time in order to share that with others...we cannot share what we do not know or have. So search for that good if you cannot see it and don’t feel bad about it. This is how we are able act as the Body of Christ. There is still good and beauty around.....more time might be one of those things.

There may never be a better time to have a spiritual retreat, renewal and revival than now! Over the years, I have spoken to many mature people who are now retired and they say things like, I wish I could have learned this earlier or I wish I had this spiritual practice when I was younger. Also many people have also told me how they have grown so much from their personal suffering that they would not have it taken away from them. I encourage you to use this potential change in your schedule to reignite your faith and prayer life in some way. What an amazing Easter gift that would be to God, ourselves, and others.

God does not create these situations but he does want us to grow and learn and experience growth and He absolutely brings about good and beauty from suffering and evil...Good does triumph over evil. God triumphs over death but he also needs us to be His hands and feet to defeat suffering and evil here. You have heard that saying, the way evil wins is for the good people to do nothing. The time is now to do something...even the small things. Relationships for many of us have never seemed more important; let us work on our relationship with Jesus, let us

work on your relationships with others.

We prevail and grow stronger by joining in the suffering with Christ on Good Friday but then we do have to Rise above it, don't we? Just like Jesus. We have to rise above all that is around us and find ways to overcome and live Easter. This disease has quite literally brought us to our knees. Let us not waste this opportunity to find joy in the resurrection and be redeemed by this crisis.

We will continue to have opportunities to be in solidarity with those suffering on the front lines and those suffering from illness, and in the future likely those suffering from economic strife, let us join ourselves to them spiritually and also pray for ways to help and be the hands and feet of Jesus now and in the future.

Perhaps new traditions will even be born from this unique year. Look for the good things, they will give us strength. And for those days that we don't think we can do it anymore, Paul also offers words of encouragement in his letter to the Philippians.

*Philippians 4:4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Lastly, I wish to thank you all for the many, many ways in which you have reached out to your fellow parishioners, to Tripp and me, and to the church. I am vivified by all the good that I am seeing around me and I hope that you will take joy and solace in seeing the church in action in our community and world around you also. A good friend uses a quote often, "what is important doesn't necessarily get our attention, what gets our attention becomes important." Let's fix our attention and eyes on Jesus this holy season of Easter so that He becomes ever more important every day.

Sincerely through the Risen Christ,

Fr. Doug (Tripp sends his love, thanks and gratitude too)