



## *The Catholic Parishes of Athens & Meigs Counties*

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[www.athenscatholic.org](http://www.athenscatholic.org)

March 23, 2020

### RE: March 23 Update

Hello Everyone!

In the midst of everything, the Lord continues to work in wonderful ways! I have heard and seen such great contact happening between members of our parishes. Please continue to check in with each other. I am grateful for you all, because in times of crisis, I have seen you respond - with generous hearts - to friends and strangers. Thank God for you!

Here are some updates around our parishes:

### Churches are Still Open

The churches will continue to be open for prayer this week. Parks, charitable agencies, and churches are still permitted to be open during the "stay at home" time. So, if you need to get out and take a walk, say a prayer, recollect, or receive help, we are here for you.

- Sacred Heart is open from 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM each weekday.
- Christ the King is open all day and night.
- St. Paul is open from 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM

If you would like to obtain some Holy Water, there is a metal container in the gathering space at Christ the King. You can use whatever container you choose to bring.

### Coping with Changes

During this time we are all experiencing some grief. Our routines, habits, and daily lives have been upended. What do we do in times of grief? Well, we acknowledge that we are experiencing some change, a sort of death in our daily patterns, and that God can bring new life out of death. We acknowledge our pain, anger, sadness, confusion, and frustration.

In all of this, we never lose sight of who we are as Christians. We are children of God, and the Holy Spirit will continue to work in our lives. We come up with new routines and patterns for ourselves and our families. We check in on each other and communicate, even in electronic form. We do things that we have been putting off around our homes. We take some time to do more prayer, reading, or study. In the midst of everything, I hope to get my desk cleared off and papers sorted. Some of you have told me that you are doing a deep clean of your kitchen. In any case, the time we have can be spent well for our benefit and the benefit of others.

### Tips for Continuing to Grow Spiritually in Quarantine

One thing you may want to consider is setting up a small altar at home. In May, my aunt used to always set up a Mary altar: a small table with a nice cloth, a candle, and some flowers. We would keep fresh flowers from the garden near the statue during the month. Perhaps you could put a Mary or Jesus statue, a cross, or a Bible on a table to set aside some space in your home in a special way. On Sunday (or really every day), your family could

gather around for prayer. If you have cloths of various colors, you could use the liturgical color of the day (purple, red, and white are all colors that are coming up in the Lent and Easter season).

I saw that the Archbishop of Chicago ordered the church bells in Chicago to be rung 5 times a day for various intentions related to this virus outbreak:

9:00 a.m. – Prayer for those infected with the virus and all those who are ill;

12:00 p.m. – Prayer for healthcare workers and those attending to the sick;

3:00 p.m. – Prayer for first responders and essential workers;

6:00 p.m. – Prayer for people of every nation and their leaders;

9:00 p.m. – Prayer for those who have died today;

Perhaps we could just pray the Angelus three times a day. The bells at church ring to remind us to pray, but so many of you live and work away from the churches. Consider setting an alarm on your phone or watch to remind you to pray. We prayed the Angelus before Masses throughout Advent and Christmas. Here's a link to the prayer: <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/angelus-383>

Some of you have called in about donations for church. We don't have Sunday collections obviously, and so our income is down. You can continue to mail in any offerings or give to the parishes online. You can learn more about [setting up online giving here](#).

## Other Updates

Our parishes' charitable work continues. Our food pantry gave out a lot of food to the local school districts. We have helped some families in financial hardship.

We priests continue to pray for all your families and remember you at Mass.

The Lord continues His work among us. Let us continue to reach out to other and remember the bond that Jesus forms among all of us. Together, we are the living Body of Christ in the world. This is our calling and our hope.

More updates to come later this week!

