

March 21, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

As we suffer together the disruptions to our normal lives caused by the coronavirus, let us remain united together through prayer. Please remember that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass continues to be offered daily by Fr. Max and me. Join us by making your Spiritual Communion at least once a day:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Tomorrow is Sunday, and while public masses in our Diocese and throughout the nation are suspended and your obligation to assist at Mass has been dispensed by our bishop, nevertheless Sunday remains the Lord's Day.

To be sure that you "consecrate" Sunday to God, as you do so every Sunday when you assist at Mass, please be sure to plan with your family as to how you may keep Sunday holy to the Lord even when Mass is not available.

Here are some suggestions especially to do together as a family:

- Watch or listen to Mass together
 - o Our parish homepage will connect you to the Mass from Bishop Barron's private chapel <https://olgulf.org/>
 - o The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory will livestream their Mass <https://olvcathedral.org/>
 - o EWTN not only has Masses broadcasted, but also has programming that will lift your hearts and minds to the Lord <https://www.ewtn.com/>
 - o Relevant Radio also broadcasts the Mass and also has wonderful programming for us <https://relevantradio.com/>
- Pray the Rosary
- Read the daily readings, meditate on them, and discuss together as a family. *Magnificat* has provided a guide here: <https://mailchi.mp/magnificat.com/liturgy-of-the-word-to-celebrate-at-home?e=1d27cb7c02>
- Pray the Stations of the Cross

Also, as we keep the Lord's Day, let us be more intent about our practice of charity. It is said that, "Charity begins at home." You may be spending more time with your families these days, so be extra patient with each other. And don't forget about your neighbors who may need a call, a text, or an email to ask if they need anything. This time of trial can really be a tool for all of us to grow in holiness (loving God and neighbor more and more)...if we actually take advantage of it.

Lastly, this Sunday, March 22 is the Fourth Sunday of Lent. It is named "Laetare Sunday," meaning "Rejoice Sunday." This nickname comes from the fact that the Entrance Antiphon for the Fourth Sunday of Lent begins with the words "Rejoice (or *Laetare* in Latin), Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast."

Why should we rejoice? For one thing, Lent is almost over!!! Our days of penance are drawing to a close. And the great feast of Easter is coming soon!

But even more importantly, as we apply the message of this antiphon to our current situation, why should we rejoice in the midst of what we are experiencing now?

Because, we know that Christ has conquered Satan and is victorious permanently over sin and Death. (And this means even the coronavirus!) And while we may be suffering now, thereby united with Christ's passion and cross, we KNOW that after the crucifixion, there is the glorious resurrection! We simply ask for the grace of God to help us persevere and not to give up, so that one day (hopefully soon) we may experience a resurrection of being delivered from this contagion.

We hope and we trust in God's care for us! And that's why we should rejoice even now!

Have a blessed Sunday!

- Fr. Tommy