

WHAT TO DO?

The news that came out regarding the cancellation of all public Masses and devotions on Monday was quite a shock. I expected it, but it was still a palpable shock. If you are reading this in the bulletin, please realize that I am writing this as of Monday evening. So, I am pretty sure things have already changed.

We all want this pandemic to end as quickly as possible. We are being asked to make an extraordinary sacrifice. As faithful Catholics we rely on the Sacraments for God's grace. This seems so unfair.

This virus is unprecedented. It is not the flu - it is something different. The highly contagious nature of it demands that people keep their distance from one another. The most vulnerable among us - the elderly, those with underlying health conditions - need to be protected from this. It is an act of charity to make this great sacrifice help save lives. We are trying to buy time for the doctors and scientists to find a vaccine and treatments. By not having large gatherings (large is now defined as 50 people) we are hoping to reduce the rate of spread.

Some have criticized the bishop and church leaders for these decisions. They cite St. Damien of Molokai or the Bubonic Plague. In the days of the plague, they had no idea how it was all transmitted so it wasn't as if they said, "we'll take the risk." Damien of Molokai went to the lepers knowing he would catch it and die. But he wasn't the cause of their illness.

With this illness you could have it, not know it, never get symptoms, and be spreading it to everyone you meet. All of the bishops have made these very difficult decisions I am sure with a heavy heart. We need to be united as the Church under our bishop. Pray for him.

As of now, the church is open for private prayer and Confessions will still be heard at scheduled times. Masses and the Mass intentions are being offered privately. Private means at unannounced times with no congregation. Know that we have many Mass intentions open and available and if you would like one, the office is still open and functioning. Unite yourself to the Mass through Spiritual Communion. I've printed one below.

Remember to pray your Rosary. Padre Pio said, "it is the weapon of our times." Whatever Lenten sacrifices you've been making - make them with greater resolve and offer them for the sick, the homebound, those who are isolated, the Holy Souls in Purgatory, the doctors and scientists, our leaders, etc.

We will be using the website, REMIND messages, the telephone recording, emails, and any other way that we can think of to keep in communication with you. For now, the bulletin is still being printed and we will have them available for you. But realize the bulletin information is a week old by the time you get it.

Things change and they change quickly. We all need to understand that things are going to be different for a while and perhaps inconvenient. We will get through this.

May the blessing of Almighty God + descend upon you and remain with you forever.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

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.

Taken from *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Saint Alphonsus Liguori. Published by Tan Books.

PRAYER TO END THE PANDEMIC

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas, we fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness. For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust. In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy. Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

May God bless you,
Father Sikorski