

Dear Sacred Heart – St. Louis Parish Families and Sacred Heart School Families,

I am sure by the time that you receive this letter you will know that Archbishop Sample has requested that all public masses be cancelled through April 14th, Tuesday following Easter. I never imagined that this is something that we would ever experience and am at a loss for words.

In addition to the cancellation of Sunday and Daily Mass, all other scheduled parish activities are cancelled, this includes our Lenten Penance Service, Stations of the Cross, regular Confessions, etc. Sacred Heart School is also closed at this time, along with the other schools in the State of Oregon through April 28th.

These cancellations, while inconvenient, are not the end of the world. They have been made by President Donald Trump, Governor Kate Brown, and Archbishop Alexander Sample for the health and safety of our people and we must try to adhere to them the best that we can.

The public celebration of the Mass and School have not been cancelled so that we can get a free pass and have some extra free time. These actions are taken because we need to stay home and away from any large public gatherings, especially for those people that are at risk for contracting the COVID-19 virus.

On a more practical note, when we are unable to have Sunday Mass, we are unable to provide you with the opportunity to make your weekly offering to the Church. Sadly, just because our services are cancelled does not mean that bills cease to incur. The Archdiocese of Portland has asked us to continue to pay our school and parish employees during this time even if they are unable to fulfill their work duties due to closures.

I would ask that while we do have not our regularly scheduled public masses that you still give what you plan to give each week. Please consider either mailing your contribution to the parish office (PO BOX 236 Gervais 97026), dropping it by the parish office during regular business hours or making your donation via WeShare on the Parish Website. We depend on your generosity during this difficult time.

The parish office will continue to hold regular hours. I will still be available for individual appointments in the parish office. We would ask though that you try to call and take care of any business over the phone or by email first.

If you are one of those individuals within these categories of those who should not go out during this time – 1. Over the age of 60 2. Have compromised immune systems or other health factors 3. Anyone not feeling well enough to go out or seriously feel that you should not go out, please contact the office by phone or email if you have groceries or medications that need to be picked up for you. We are compiling a list of members and families who are at lower risk of contracting the virus, who are willing to do these errands for you. Please contact the parish via

email or phone if you are willing to help and serve your church in this capacity. We are one body and that body needs your help.

Make sure to check the parish website regularly for updates www.shstl.org I will be posting daily and Sunday homilies. We will also post weekly bulletins and have some bulletins available in the adoration chapel.

I will still be celebrating mass every day in the chapel that I have at the rectory. Please be assured that you are all in my prayers! If you have any particular intentions that you would like to have remembered at these masses, please feel free to email them to me or mail them to the parish office.

My prayer during this time is that we truly do what is being asked of us. Not, what is being asked of us by the state or the Archbishop, but what is being asked of us by God. We are given the gift of time. Our kids, our home and families have fewer activities to attend to and while this is inconvenient, yes, it gives you more time to spend with your family and to pray with your family. We also personally have more time to pray and spend time with God. Use this time wisely. This is not the Lent and start of Easter that any of us have envisioned, but this is the death that Christ is asking from us right now. Let us embrace it, offering it up, uniting ourselves with those who cannot come to mass on a regular basis due to health or other limitations. Let us come to a deeper appreciation of our ability to regularly participate in the sacramental and spiritual life of the Church, especially now that we have to fast from those very things that give us life. May we rise with the Lord in Eastertime to a new outlook on the life that Christ Jesus has won for us.

Fr. James

Sacred Heart – St. Louis Catholic Church
PO Box 236
Gervais, OR 97026
503-792-4231
secretary@shstl.org or bookkeeper@shstl.org