



12521 Inwood Road
Dallas, TX 75244
stritaparish.net

March 20, 2020

Dear St. Rita Community:

I hope you are managing well, keeping in good spirits and close to the Lord! This has certainly been an interesting week! I have kept you all in my prayers.

It's been Monday since updating you about the Parish and the School, so I wanted to do so before the weekend. I think you'd be very proud of St. Rita, both the Parish and the School, for the way we've pulled together and responded to these unprecedented circumstances. This is a wonderfully strong community! In this together, we continue to be a community of hope for our people and our city. The faith and prayer and hard work of all of us make this so.

Regarding our worship of God. Fr. Michal and I continue to offer Mass each day, keeping the assigned intentions as well as praying for the Parish and the world. Know that we keep you in our hearts early each morning as we offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, unceasing since the Upper Room.

Also, **this Sunday, we will livestream Mass!** We will livestream an **English Mass at 9:00am** and a **Bilingual Mass at 10:30am**. Please keep an eye on all our media platforms for more information.

The church has been open for **Eucharistic Adoration** every day this week from 9:00am to 7:00pm. This has been a beautiful thing; the church has become a sanctuary of silence and peace before the Blessed Sacrament. If you can take advantage of this, I encourage you to do so. For many, it has given solace. We will do this again next week, likely until public Masses are offered again. **Confessions** also continue Thursdays and Saturdays as normal. If, however, you need to make a special appointment for Confession, please just call our Parish Office.

Regarding pastoral care. A priest is still available for emergency pastoral and sacramental visits. If it's an emergency, please just call the mainline and follow the prompts to call the ER line, which goes directly to a priest. If you would like to see a priest for counsel or discussion, please call the main number to seek an appointment. I would highly encourage you, however, to think about making a phone appointment, as we are trying to respect social distance. This, to be honest, because we need our priests to be healthy and ready to serve persons in serious emergencies.

We are also working to construct an **outreach ministry to vulnerable parishioners**. Some of our parishioners have been working creatively and beautifully to accomplish this! I hope to have more details for you on this very soon. In the meantime, **we have begun calling parishioners on the phone** (beginning with our elderly and categorically vulnerable), simply to check in on them to see how they are doing. Having gone through that list once, we will go through it again. It's our goal to let no one slip through the cracks. If you know of any of our members you think we need to check on, please let us know! Let's keep an eye on each other, beginning with the least of these.

Regarding communication. The best source for accurate information regarding the Parish is our **website** (www.stritaparish.net). We've also just created a **YouTube channel** (search St. Rita Catholic Community Dallas at



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YouTube.com: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZL-OvDfSdgpjrYDRxIwlng?view_as=subscriber). If you're on social media, please follow us on **Twitter** and **Facebook**. And, be sure you are receiving emails from the Parish. We currently use **Flocknote** to send emails and texts, so remind friends and family to check their spam or junk folders for emails from mail@flocknote.com and make us a safe sender. If you are not receiving emails and would like to, please join our list, go to <https://stritadallas.flocknote.com/> and add yourself!

We are adding content to help you get through isolation and social distance! It'll be amateur for a while, I'm sure, so bear with us! But we just want to reach you! If you have any ideas or suggestions, please send them our way!

Regarding finances. These have quickly become unprecedented times, and I understand the hardships that you and your family are going through each day. Please know that I pray not just for your spiritual wellbeing but also for your material wellbeing at this time. Let's support each other! Let's give each other a hand and patronize each other's businesses. Let's all do our part to support the local economy!

As for St. Rita, closing the church on Sunday has already affected our weekly contribution income, and this will continue financially to impact our Parish significantly. **Thank you** to those who have mailed checks this week to St. Rita or who have dropped them off at our Parish Office. You all are just beautiful, and we truly appreciate it! As I said earlier this week, we receive 65% of our annual contributions from Sunday collections at Mass and through the mail; the other 35% is contributed on-line. We budget almost \$70,000 each week in tithing contributions, \$45,000 of which is from cash and checks. Thus, without Sunday Mass collections, we are drastically below our weekly average.

And so, we're taking active steps to ensure the financial health of the Parish by drastically cutting spending. Of course, keeping our employees paid is our top priority. At this point, we are implementing immediate cost-cutting measures. This week, for instance, we have done the following:

1. Restructured our construction debt.
2. Only running AC in essential campus buildings. School, Commons, gym, Sweeney Hall are closed. The church is reduced to certain hours of the day, and the main parish building has been cut to business hours only.
3. Other utilities have been turned off or reduced.
4. Landscaping, cleaning, trash and building control services have been reduced or terminated.
5. Reduced our supply order to minimal items needed.
6. All vendors have been reviewed and analyzed to determine where other cuts can be made.

We will be utilizing our facilities staff in many of these areas where vendors have been cut. Without the church, Parish events, and School in operation on campus, our facilities staff can readily be used to cover these needs. If you would like to support St. Rita at this time, you may do so in the following ways:

1. Contributing through our on-line service WeShare at the following link:

<https://stritacc.weshareonline.org/>.



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2. Mailing your contribution to the following address:

St. Rita Parish
Attn. Business Office
12521 Inwood Rd.
Dallas, TX 75244

3. Dropping off a check at our Parish Office. At this point, we remain open Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.
4. If neither of these options work for you, please just call our Business Manager, Helaine Blizzard, and she would be happy to assist you. Her email is hblizzard@stritaparish.net and her direct line is 214-451-6513.

Again, thank you all for your kind words and prayers and, more importantly, your loving deeds! Let's keep going! Let's be the Church! Because, in Christ, that's exactly what we are! I love you all!

I am, yours in Christ,
Fr. Joshua J. Whitfield
Pastoral Administrator
St. Rita Catholic Community

#WeAreStRita