



Pro-Cathedral of
ST. MARY
— Est. 1877 —

October 10, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

As was announced at all of our parish Masses the weekend of October 10th and 11th, I write to inform all of you that I have tested positive for COVID-19. In the later part of this past week, I noticed a scratchy throat in the morning, which I would compare as very similar to throat irritation from seasonal allergies. I typically get seasonal allergies, like so many others do in the Fall and the Spring. On the morning of Friday, October 9th, I also noticed a very slight, but persisting headache. This then raised alarm in my mind because both of these symptoms are common symptoms of COVID-19. I then immediately removed myself from contact with others and underwent a COVID-19 nasal swab rapid test. While both of these symptoms were very minor and hardly noticeable, and are also symptoms of other common illnesses, I did feel a grave responsibility to immediately quarantine and get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible, given the high degree of contact a priest has with others, especially over a given weekend.

On Friday evening, October 9th, I received notification that my results indeed came back positive for COVID-19. After receiving the positive notification, I immediately informed Bishop Kagan and began making plans for all of the weekend Masses to be covered, which also included a Wedding Mass on Saturday, October 10th and First Holy Communion on Sunday afternoon, October 11th. I am grateful for Bishop Kagan's kind support and generosity, as well as the generosity of my brother priests from the University of Mary in ensuring all of the Masses here at St. Mary's are covered this current weekend.

In terms of next steps, allow me to offer what I can at this time. Because of my positive COVID-19 test, I will be quarantining for the days to come. I have been directed to quarantine for at least 10 days, from the first sign of any symptoms. In regard to Fr. Wolf, although we have separate living quarters in the priest's residence, he is considered to be a "close contact" to me and he too is instructed to quarantine for a period of time, regardless of whether or not he tests positive for COVID-19. I am happy to report that Fr. Wolf is currently not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19. I have also directed our parish staff to closely monitor their symptoms and to be tested in the days to come.

As you might imagine, all of this will impact our day to day operations as a parish for the coming days. First, the parish office will be closed until all of the necessary testing of our parish staff allows us to safely reopen. Second, we will not be having our regular 7:00 am Daily Mass and Confessions until at least the week of Monday, October 19th. Finally, I am currently working to schedule priests to cover our weekend Masses, the weekend of October 17th and 18th.

I sincerely regret having to inform all of you about the recent transpiring of what has been explained in this letter. We will provide any additional updates on our parish website. Let us continue to pray for one another, especially those most seriously ill from the coronavirus.

God bless.

Father Jared M. Johnson
Pastor