



OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

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Dear parishioner,

We hope this letter finds you safe and well in these trying times. During this time of heightened anxiety and concern due to the pandemic of the coronavirus, we want to reassure you that you remain in our thoughts and prayers.

Prior to new guidelines being issued by The President of the United States, many of you had already decided that staying in the safe and familiar surroundings of your home was the most prudent course of action to take. Father Paul and the staff of Our Lady of Mercy applaud your diligence and support you in prayer as you care for those you love, taking the steps necessary to maintain your safety and well-being. In turn we ask that you pray for all those affected by this pandemic. And pray, too, for those who are working around the clock in search of safe and effective ways to treat and cope with this crisis.

While the faith community of Our Lady of Mercy Parish delights in your presence at our liturgical celebrations, the times require us to look for new ways to worship our loving God and to stay connected as a faith community. Bishop Libasci has directed us to follow the guidelines outlined by The President of the United States and avoid public gatherings. **We are now restricted from the public celebration of Mass. Fr Paul will continue to celebrate Mass in order to satisfy the intentions that have been requested.** While this is a drastic and unprecedented move, it will serve to allow us to fulfill the directive of our bishop that Masses and the Eucharist continue to be celebrated for the intentions of all the faithful and also to remain compliant with the guidelines set forth by our president and the CDC. With that in mind we will be using our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/olmnh>) to livestream our weekend Masses. The Mass on Saturday at 4:30 PM and another Mass on Sunday at 9:30 AM will be our new “virtual” Mass times. Unfortunately, we will not be able to do the same for weekday masses yet.

We have no way of knowing how long we will find ourselves living in this new reality. The situation requires us to adapt quickly as events and information unfold. During this time of crisis, we ask you to check our website and Facebook page for updates. We will be using Flocknote to make announcements so if you have not signed up, we encourage you to do so.

Father Paul, Deacon John and all the staff understand that this pandemic is having an impact on your household budget, leading to more angst in an already difficult time. For those experiencing financial difficulties, you are in our prayers. As of the time of this writing Congress appears poised to act quickly in providing substantial relief to families. Their actions have the capability to reach many people much quicker than anything we could provide so we suggest that you pay close attention to those relief efforts.

As you might imagine, in this time of diminished mass attendance, Our Lady of Mercy is also experiencing a significant financial shortfall. I ask that you prayerfully consider ways that you can continue to support the dedicated staff and ministry leaders who are here to support you and minister to you in body, mind and spirit.

Together, as a community of believers, we will get through this. In our second reading this past Sunday, the Apostle Paul reminds us that we are a people of hope.

Brothers and sisters:
Since we have been justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have gained access by faith
to this grace in which we stand,
and we boast in hope of the glory of God.

And hope does not disappoint,
because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Rom 5:1-2, 5

In closing, we must support each other in this time of uncertainty and anxiety. Our Lenten Journey has turned out to be more of a journey than any of us imagined. At the conclusion of the journey, as we know, Christ conquered sin and death. Our God is truly an awesome God and we can find comfort in His presence in our lives.

God Bless,

Rev. Msgr. Paul Bouchard, Pastor
Deacon John Castelot

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To access our livestream Masses you may go to our facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/olmnh>