

# CHURCH OF ST. PATRICK

53 ST. PATRICK'S PLACE STATEN ISLAND, NY 10306

March 22, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

What is happening to us now is something that hasn't happened in this country during any of our lifetimes. The last big pandemic was 1918 (my mother was one of the survivors of this "Spanish Flu").

We are experiencing fear:

- of the unknown, because we don't know what is going to happen, for how long, and to whom.
- of financial insecurity, of bankruptcy, of poverty.
- of getting the virus and giving it to our loved ones.
- of not being able to reach out to them if they become infected.
- of being isolated with the virus from all those we most need to be around us and support us.
- of dying.

As Catholics we know that the antidote to fear is faith in Jesus Christ. And that faith is not something we can achieve on our own. It happens through a relationship with Jesus which gives us the gift to believe that He will take care of us, that He is in charge, that He will make all things work together for good, that we are not at the mercy of the coronavirus, but under the mercy of God.

The other antidote to fear is love. Fear is all about ourselves, while love is about others. If we have perfect love we have no fear – that doesn't happen in this life – but the more love we have the less fear. As with faith true love comes from our relationship with Jesus Christ.

During this "time apart" we can take the opportunity that this "imposed Lent" affords us to grow closer and closer to Jesus. And we can use our cellphones to communicate with people even more isolated than ourselves. It can be a true time to return to the Lord – what Lent was meant to be in the first place – and a prelude to the great resurrection that lies at the end of this tunnel.

May God Keep you and your families safe, healthy, and sane. May He pour His Healing Blood over our parish. May He give you the grace to turn this lemon into lemonade, this stumbling block into a stepping stone, this suffering into new life. May we learn and accept by the sheer force of this trial what is truly important and what is of temporary or of no value.

As the virus tries to drag us into suffering and death may Jesus truly come alive in us.

Sincerely,



Jeff Conway, Pastor