



St. Simon Stock – Saint Joseph Church

Carmelite Friars

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Dear Parishioners,

I write to you to update you on the management of the Coronavirus pandemic here at St Simon Stock-St Joseph Church. As always, we will follow the directives of the Archdiocese of New York and the State and local government directives.

As of right now our church remains open for personal and private prayer from 7:30am – 7pm each day. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed during this time. It was nice yesterday to see a good number of people coming to the church to spend a little time in silent prayer. The coronavirus has certainly altered the way we live and basically destroyed our daily routines. But it should not rock our faith and trust in God.

With schools closed, many people out of work and people basically trying to stay healthy I suspect apartments can get crowded. Being confined with other people, even if they are family and loved ones, can bring out the best and the worst in each of us! We all have an innate desire to be connected: seeing our friends, getting together in groups or touching each other. When this is shut down we can feel isolated. If you feel you need a break and just have to get out, feel free to come to St Simon Stock-St Joseph church during these times and spend some time in prayer. I know I find it relaxing and a nice way to calm myself during these trying times.

If you do come to the church, please keep the following in mind.

1. If you are sick, please do not come to the Church.
2. If you come to the church through the chapel door you will see a hand sanitizer on the wall. We encourage all who come to the church to make use of it. It will help us keep the church germ free and safe.
3. From 7:30am – 10:30am all the church doors will be open. From 10:30am – 7:00pm please enter the Church through the chapel side door.
4. We ask that you not congregate in the Chapel since it is small and not conducive to maintaining social distancing. There is plenty of room in the Church to sit silently.
5. We ask that you be 3-6 feet away from any other person in the church if they are not family members.

As you know, Lent is a penitential season. Because of the situation, many meetings have been cancelled and many of us have curtailed our activities. “Reconciliation Monday” which has taken place in the Archdiocese in past years has been cancelled as well as our regular confession times until public masses can take place. At most times, either Fr Nicholas or I am around in the priory or the church. If you would like to go to confession stop by. If we are sitting in chapel praying (or sleeping LOL!), feel free to come and ask if you can go to confession. You can also call beforehand if you want to make sure a priest is available before heading out.

The best place to get updates as to when things may begin to get back to normal is by checking the parish website (saintsimonstockchurch.org) or visiting the parish Facebook page ([facebook.com/StSimonStockStJoseph](https://www.facebook.com/StSimonStockStJoseph)). We will be posting updates regularly. If the suspension of masses is going to be extended we will consider other options such as livestreaming messages and perhaps private masses from our church. In the meantime, there are a number of places you can access daily mass from St Patrick’s Cathedral. This coming weekend they will also begin broadcasting the mass in Spanish. You can get to it by going to:

<https://www.catholicfaithnetwork.org>

<https://catholicfaithnetwork.org/cfn-livestream-player>

<https://www.saintpatrickscathedral.org/live>

As you may know, there is talk that a “Shelter in Place” order may be coming for New York City. In the event this happens we will follow the directives of the Archdiocese of New York. Very likely the parish staff will be sent home and the parish offices closed. In the event this happens do not come to the Priory until this “Shelter in Place” order is lifted. All Church buildings will also be closed for all activities. Yet, the parish staff will still work from home and we hope to be able to remain in communication with all through our parish website, parish Facebook page and by using other means of communication. Feel free to call the parish office. There is a good chance the phone may not be answered since the secretaries will be out. If this is the case, leave a message as directed in both English and Spanish for the office or for Fr Mike. Each time a message is left in my voicemail box I get a text and can get the message right from my cellphone. We will respond to all pastoral needs as quickly and safely as possible.

As you can imagine, not having mass each week will effect significantly the parish financial situation. While we have other means of income, the weekly collection is important. If you have not already done so, now is a good time to use the online giving option provided by “WeShare”. There is a link on it on our website that will allow you to make your weekly donation to the parish and have it charged to a credit card or taken directly from your checking account. Another option is to stop by the church and place your weekly donation in the basket that is in the front of the church over the weekend.

The reality of the ramifications of this pandemic is just beginning to be understood. This is uncharted territory for all of us. It has caused much anxiety, stress and fear in some. That's normal. The unknown is never comfortable, very unsettling! Take the time to look out for each other. Be charitable. Share. Some necessary measures are being taken for our safety and protection. Together we'll get through this. Be reasonable. Be cautious. Be safe.

May Mary, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Joseph protect us in these challenging times, the health care workers and all those who come down with the coronavirus.

May God bless you and keep you in his care,

Fr Mike