



St. Simon Stock – Saint Joseph Church
Carmelite Friars
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Dear Parishioners,

We are only a few days into the changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic and I must say, we miss seeing all of you around and I certainly miss the “normalcy” that once existed!

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 you may know, Governor Cuomo has announced that all businesses must reduce its in-person workforce to 25%. Cardinal Dolan has asked that all Pastors comply with the Governor’s directive. In light of this, I write to inform you that as of 9pm this evening all non-essential employees will be asked to work from home during their regularly scheduled hours and only come in to work on an “as needed” basis. The parish offices will be essentially closed until this “Shelter in Place” order is lifted. 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 and by using other means of communication.

Feel free to call the parish office during the day. In an emergency call at any time. There is a 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. 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.

Our Eucharistic Ministers provide a needed service to our shut-ins. They bring the Eucharist to people who cannot get to church each week. They often also provide a visit and comfort to people who often feel isolated. I along with Cardinal Dolan would like to encourage all Eucharistic Ministers to continue their ministry to the homebound to the extent they can. Eucharistic Ministers can get the Blessed Sacrament by coming to the Priory. We would suggest that you call those you will be bringing communion to let them know when you will come and to check and make sure no one in the apartment has a cold or fever or been possibly exposed to the Coronavirus. If you yourself do not feel well or possibly have been exposed to the Coronavirus of course please refrain bring bring

communion or visiting anyone. If you become aware of someone who would like to go to confession or be anointed please speak with Fr Nicholas or myself. If for whatever reason you cannot bring communion to a person you regularly visit, by all means please call them, pray with them and let them know that they are in our prayers.

We are all still wondering what is going to happen with Palm Sunday and Holy week. The Cardinal has said that the Archdiocese will issue decisions regarding all this next week. When this happens we will give clear instructions as to how all this will be handled in our wonderful parish.

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.

You may also be overwhelmed by information: news updates, statistics and projections. While you are home with your family find time to pray together. I know some of you have instantly become a stay home Mom or Dad. I encourage you to be creative you're your kids who quickly will become bored out of their minds. Do you remember the good old days before the Internet, cellphones and cable TV? It was a peaceful and innocent time of learning new things that were right under our noses, at the same time staying healthy. Don't look to this time as a burden but instead see it as a blessing and a time to discover things about your children you might have missed as you sent them off to school each day. We are learning much from this present crisis and we are never too old to learn and accept new realities. Savor the memories and help those who need help as you can! Come to church and spend some time before the Blessed Sacrament while we can still do it.

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