

## *A Letter from the Pastor*

Dear Parish Family,

This is going to be a Lent like none other. We find ourselves in the confusing and upsetting place of having to deal with this Coronavirus Pandemic. When word came to us last Saturday at 2PM that all Masses were canceled for the weekend, I was "Doubting Thomas," until I then realized that even though we may feel healthy and have no apparent symptoms, we could indeed be carriers and transmitters of the disease that was still incubating in us. I now know how serious this is and how life saving social distancing can be. I applaud the stores opening for senior citizen shoppers early in the morning so that they are not left without food items and more at risk with catching this disease. Therefore, I just wanted to leave you with some important details that were shared with Cardinal Dolan and the curia of the Archdiocese about what we do know and what we ought to be doing.

\* Have a disciplined plan for each day: Plan to rise at the same time, Sleep well, Eat well, Pray during the day, avoid socializing and keep busy with household chores, that will keep body, mind and spirit engaged. Try to get out to walk and enjoy fresh air.

\* All Masses will be cancelled and our school, religious education classes and parish meetings of societies and ministries will be discontinued until April 20<sup>th</sup> at the earliest.

\* Funeral Masses and Weddings can be held but the maximum allowed inside the church is 30 people. Many catering halls canceled or postponed wedding receptions and restaurants will only be open for "take out" orders.

\* Baptisms will be held, but each family is limited to 10 people attending. There will be a maximum of 5 babies each week.

\* Mass intentions are being honored by each of our priests in their private Mass.

\* The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered on Saturdays in the Church from 3:30PM to 6PM. It was suggested that if possible, to offer confessions outside in the fresh air.

\* Mass is offered on television on the stations EWTN, CFN, or logging onto [www.Archny.org](http://www.Archny.org) and Saint Patrick's Cathedral.

\* We realize that this will have a severe impact on your family financially as it has our parish. We are asking if you are able to drop off or mail in your weekly donation envelope (5371 Amboy Road, Staten Island, NY 10312), go to [http://go.4lpi.com/DEMO-032020 WeShare-reg.html](http://go.4lpi.com/DEMO-032020>WeShare-reg.html) to join the WE Share Program or visit [www.olssparish.org](http://www.olssparish.org) for online giving, to help us meet our obligations.

\* Additionally, with so much time gathered as family both at work and recreation, it is also very important for us to pray. I strongly recommend the Family Rosary. The Church will be open for prayer from 9AM to 5PM.

\* If you are aware of people needing assistance with food shopping or just being home alone I encourage you to call your neighbor and chat on the phone and please let us know if someone is ill and needs the Sacrament for the Anointing of the Sick.

\* Masks and latex gloves may help, but should not be relied upon as a total protection from the COVID-19 virus. Sanitizing by washing your hands frequently is a must.

\* There are still questions left: Will there be a Palm Sunday, Holy Week, First Communions, and Easter Masses? By that time as we draw closer to these dates, we will know. Some estimates claim that the peak of this might be over around June. The prevention efforts we do now will ultimately save lives.

\* I am remembering all first responders, especially all those in the medical field and having direct contact with patients; let us not forget them.

This poem arrived from Michigan, "Silver Lining":

*"And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.*

*And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.*

*And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed." - Kitty O' Meara*

*Father Tom Devery*