

16 March 2020

Dear Friends,

I send you this note during an unprecedented moment in time to let you know that I am praying for you daily and offering Mass for your intentions and those of our entire community. As we radically change our daily routine to ensure the safety of those at risk of the virus, may we take this time to radically enter into Lent and prepare for the Resurrection at Easter.

It is most certainly a unique time in our lives, especially in parish lives, as we are unable to celebrate Mass as a community, gather and celebrate. Sometimes the unknown brings about fear. Yet it is also a moment to withdraw to the quiet of our homes and our hearts, and to be present with our families. I pray that as we emerge from the tumult of the COVID-19 period, we will do so with fresh eyes to our dependence on Jesus and also our neighbors in need. This year, the Easter season will have new meaning if we embrace this cross.

I thank you for your prayers and support of me and our collaborative parish community through your participation in our life of faith and care for one another. Please know that your priests are celebrating Mass daily for you and in a special way for those who are sick and for those who care for the sick. All of the intentions, and the memorials which have been booked will be offered each day at Mass. I must say it is odd to celebrate Mass without all of you, but it is important. Please watch Mass on the weekend with your families on CatholicTV.org or WatchTheMass.com. Pope Francis and Cardinal Seán have asked families to pray for the world, especially through the rosary, asking Our Lady to intercede and protect us all.

Like many of you, we live week to week in the collaborative parishes. Masses, sick calls, anointings, appointments, events, bills, business meetings are the rhythm of my week as you have a rhythm to yours. Though the regular cadence has come to a halt, our mission continues, and manage through it, we must. I thank you for all the many ways you support your parishes and for those who have dropped off and mailed in their weekly offering. I ask that you continue to support your parish financially online or choose to mail in your envelopes. We do not want to come out from this period with a mountain of debt. Hopefully the fact that our churches and schools are closed entirely will spare us some cost with utilities, yet the systems will continue to run to some extent.

Some have already offered extra support through gift cards for those unable to work. Thank you. There will be more need. We will communicate additional opportunities, such as drop off times for food pantry items or even opportunities to help us deliver food to those in need. Please check on your neighbors, especially our seniors and shut-ins.

Most importantly, if you have any spiritual needs during this time period, please do not hesitate to call ([781-337-6333](tel:781-337-6333)) or email me (frsean@shstm.org) and I will be glad to provide you my assistance in the most appropriate and safe way possible. We can discuss matters over the phone, and I am available for sacramental anointings and confessions.

Jesus, we trust in you!

In His love,
Fr. Sean

Fr. Sean M. Connor, Pastor