

PASTOR'S CORNER

In Times of Plague (i.e. pandemic)

As you are all no doubt aware, Archbishop Sample has instructed pastors to cancel all Masses and any other gatherings through April 14. Regrettably, this includes Holy Week, the Triduum, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday and all of the Masses in-between (including all daily Masses and Friday night Lenten activities as well as our reconciliation service). Someone reacted to this sad news by telling me: "Father, the Church has cancelled Easter!". This sentiment is certainly understandable, but of course nothing of the sort is even possible. Easter, which like all Masses commemorates the death and resurrection of Christ, is an historical fact. In reality, it is the single fact at the very center of God's creation; it is the connection point between eternity and our fallen world. We cannot cancel it; its efficacy continues to save and transform us and will do so throughout all of time.

That being said, this cancellation of liturgical celebrations is still a body-blow to most of us. Happily, we live in a time when many, many different sources exist to watch these celebrations, from EWTN to the Archdiocesan website itself (where Archbishop Sample will be streaming his Masses). And there are many more; a Google search will reveal pages of them.

Also please know that I am offering Mass each day for the intentions of all parishioners, their friends and families, and in particular for all adversely affected by COVID19. Rather startlingly these Masses are prayed to an empty Church which for me has the effect of focusing this Mass intention even more finely and intensely.

Our bulletin will be online each weekend so I invite you to visit it in order to receive any and all updates as regards your parish. Our offices (school and parish) are closed to all visitors, but personnel will be here periodically to check for both phone and email messages. Please do NOT stop by the office to conduct business. All of our buildings have been deep-cleaned and sanitized, so access is minimal.

As I recommended to some of you last week: minimize your time watching the cable and local news. Remember that these are commercial ventures which make more money the more people who stay glued to their screens. Most hopefully they won't lie or deceive for that purpose (although I have my doubts with some of them), but they will certainly put the most lurid and catastrophizing details front and center. Secondly, spend more time praying for an increase in your faith and a strengthening of the virtue of hope. Please remember that during a time when our attention is focused most strongly on matters of survival and sickness, we are the most tempted to abandon the Lord Jesus and fall back on our own (or on our country's) meager resources. My brothers and sisters in the Lord, this is not the first plague that our Church has gone through and we will most assuredly get through this one as well. This is of little credit to us, but rather to the Lord Christ who alone comprises the source of all our hope.

Keep safe. Stay home as much as you can. Pray often. We'll see you all sooner than you think. Oh, in case you haven't heard: wash your hands!

Fr. Steve Geer

