

April 3, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

As you are most likely aware from previous communications, the church was closed yesterday and adoration discontinued due to concerns related to the risk of spread and infection by the Covid19 virus. In addition, I was informed today that a part-time member of the parish staff who had been ill has tested positive for the virus. As a consequence, the priests and members of the parish staff who could potentially have contracted the virus are now in quarantine status until at least this coming Wednesday, which will be fourteen days from the last day that the infected staff member was present in the rectory.

In addition, one parishioner who had been present in the church on some occasions up until last Friday, March 27 is has also become ill. At present neither I, Msgr. Murphy, nor any potentially exposed members of the parish staff have experienced any symptoms associated with the Covid19 virus. We are also unaware of any other person who spent time in the church in recent weeks either testing positive or displaying symptoms associated with the virus.

Given these circumstances, as well as communication from government officials and health professionals at the local and national levels indicating that we should expect a surge and a peak in the rate of infection in the upcoming weeks, and, weighing the potential risks involved, I, in collaboration with members of the staff, and after discussion with Bishop O'Connell, have determined that we will not for the time being continue to live stream or record any Liturgical celebrations in the church. This includes what had been our plan to live stream and record Mass on Palm Sunday as well as the Paschal Triduum this coming week. Given that all of these Liturgies at which Cardinal Sean will preside, will be broadcast on Catholic Television, duplicating this effort while potentially jeopardizing the health, well-being and lives of even the very limited number of those who might participate as well as those they might potentially infect would in my view be imprudent and ill-advised.

I realize that the loss of the opportunity to join with fellow parishioners for the Holy Week Liturgies even in a virtual way may be very disappointing for some. In these days, however, safety and the protection of human life, health and well-being must be paramount and our first priority and consideration. Also, we are especially blest to have such a quality television network available to us in Catholic Television as well as the opportunity to join with our archbishop, Cardinal Sean as we celebrate the mysteries which lie at the very core of our faith and at the center of the church's life and our lives as believers.

Even though we may not be able to be physically present in our church as we celebrate these solemn days of Holy Week, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the one who animates and gives life to the human soul and to the church, we can be present to the mysteries that the church will celebrate next week through the broadcasts that will be available to us. The great African-American Spiritual, "Were you there?" asks if we were present when Jesus was crucified for our salvation. The answer is YES! I was there! IF, we choose to enter into the mysteries we will celebrate next week. Despite the pandemic and all of the challenges and obstacles that we are currently facing, Christ invites each of us to journey with him this week into Jerusalem and through his betrayal, passion, death and resurrection to new life. Thank you for your prayers and your ongoing support of our parish. Please know that you are in my prayers and be assured of my best wishes for a grace filled Holy Week and a joyous Easter.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Mike Doyle

Pastor