

March 24, 2020

Dear Nativity Parishioners,

I hope this letter finds everyone well. These are challenging days for sure. I just want to take a moment to check in with you. As I said last week, Tuesday is the day I usually write my article for the bulletin so I thought I would just touch base and keep you informed as best as I can for now.

I am still waiting on further instructions from the Archdiocese regarding Holy Week and Easter. As I get that information, I will share it with all of you.

As you know, Governor Wolf issued a "stay at home" order yesterday. As a result of that, Fr. Brian and I are discussing how that might impact us leaving the church open during the day for personal prayer. Right now, we are exposing the Blessed Sacrament after the 8am Mass and leaving it exposed until 7pm. There is no Benediction because we cannot hold public services. For the time being, I plan to continue that practice until I hear from the Archdiocese that we should stop.

Given the "stay at home" order, there will be no confessions as originally planned for this evening. I will assume that Saturday afternoon confessions will still take place unless we are directed otherwise.

I want let you know that our parish office is officially closed. Some of the staff is trying to work from home but our business manager will still be coming in to pay our bills. Speaking of the bills, I want to thank so many of you who have called and asked how to continue with your Sunday offering since there is no Mass. I am grateful for your concern.

If I may, I would suggest two options. The first is to sign up for Parish Giving. That is the online option that a good number of our parishioners use. That information can be found on our website at www.noolp.org. The second option I would suggest is to mail it in to our parish office. Many people put their offering into a larger envelope and mail it in. Now some folks have been leaving their donation in the mailbox next to the office door. Previously, I said that was ok. However, that was before the stay at home order was issued. For now, I would suggest either of the two ways I just mentioned. Believe me, I am grateful that some of you are even thinking about that at this difficult time.

Along with the office being closed, we lost the main phone line to the parish. We are working to get it fixed but have not been successful so far. If you need to contact the parish please use 215-672-7691. You can leave a voice mail on that line and Fr. Brian and I are checking it regularly.

I want to thank everyone who is tuning into our livestream Mass. I know it is not the same but it is one way we can stay connected to the parish. I will tell you that it is strange talking to the camera in the choir loft instead of a congregation, but I know you are out there and, on some level, you are spiritually present.

There has been a lot of positive feedback regarding the fact that Nativity is offering this service. People from other parishes have thanked us for providing this as an option. I cannot take the credit here because the system was installed before I arrived at Nativity. I am very thankful that we have it.

As we continue our journey through Lent, I want to mention a few things. As you know, we are trying to do the Corporal Works of Mercy. I want to thank all who made the clothing drive a success. I was amazed at the number of bags that were dropped off. I am happy that many people will have new clothes to wear because of your generosity.

Tomorrow, March 25th, is the Feast of the Annunciation. Pope Francis has asked that all Christians, throughout the world, join him in praying the Our Father simultaneously for the end of the Coronavirus pandemic. He will be praying at Noon in Rome. That will be 7am our local time. I invite you to pause at 7am and pray the Our Father for the end of this global crisis.

Once again, I bring to your attention the rosary that is being prayed each night at 8pm. There is a link on our webpage. Just find where it says, "Pray the Rosary with others from the Archdiocese" and click on it. There has been consistently over 2,000 people each night. This communal rosary will continue nightly until it is not needed any longer. That will be when the pandemic is passed us and public Mass resumes. The only difference will be tomorrow night because there was a previously planned Rosary Rally by the Vocations Office. You can access that one tomorrow night at 7pm at www.heedthecall.org.

Sorry for the long message. I will keep you as informed as I can as I get more information myself. Please know that you are missed and even though you are not here physically, you are remembered in our daily Masses at Nativity.

God bless,

Fr. Joe