

March 17, 2020

Dear Nativity Parishioners,

It is Tuesday Morning, Saint Patrick's Day, and this is the time that I usually write my article for the Sunday Bulletin. However, we now know that all public Masses have been suspended for the foreseeable future. Since we will not have public Mass, we will not have a bulletin either. So, I am writing this article as an email instead.

One of my traditions on this day is to watch the Mass from my family's church in Ireland. The Mass is said in the Gaelic language and the only part I understand is the homily which is done in English. I like spotting the people I know as they sit in the pews and go to Holy Communion. Today, however, was hauntingly different.

The pastor of the parish celebrated Mass all alone in the church. Not another living soul was to be seen. The pews were all empty. Now we are faced with the same situation. So, it is my intention to livestream our daily Masses which we normally do not do.

I spoke with Fr. Brian and we agree that we will say Mass at 5:00pm on Saturday evening and 10:00am on Sunday morning. Anyone who wants to tune in is very welcome to do so. It won't be the same but at least it will still be a connection with Nativity. I am asking you very directly not to show up at church during those times because you will not be allowed to enter. Shortly after Mass is over, the church will be opened for private prayer. I ask that you keep a safe distance from others as they come to pray.

There will also be other options for Mass online as well. EWTN offers Mass several times a day. Bishop Barron just announced that he will stream his daily Mass online for the foreseeable future. Even though you might not be able to attend Mass physically, you can still participate on some level.

Fr. Brian and I are going to expose the Blessed Sacrament after we conclude daily Mass and then repose the Blessed Sacrament later in the day. You are welcome to come to church and pray during that time of Adoration.

Confessions will remain available on Saturday afternoon from 3:30 to 4:30pm. Also on Tuesday evenings from 7:00pm to 7:30pm.

The bottom line is that we will get through this. Sadly, some will get sick and some will even die as a result of this disease. Others will face economic hardship. Daily routines of work and school are disrupted. Despite all of this turmoil to life as we know it, trusting in God will give us hope.

Our Lenten journey has taken on a new and unexpected dimension. Our fasting is now more than just giving up our favorite food or drink. We are asked to sacrifice some of our daily freedoms that we often take for granted. Going to restaurants or other public venues are off limits for the time being. Truly an unexpected sacrifice.

In a time of crisis, it is easy to think about "me and my own." We become concerned with our own needs and the needs of our family and loved ones. It is easy to forget about the "other." Our Lord tells us differently. We cannot forget about the needs of those that are more vulnerable than ourselves during this crisis. We should check in on our elderly neighbors who might need some help with shopping, etc. so that they can remain safely in their homes.

Most importantly, our call to pray is taking on a new meaning. Prayer is definitely needed now. I encourage you to find time to pray. Not out of a sense of fear or desperation but out of a sense of hope. The hope that our Heavenly Father is with us in this time of crisis.

As things change and more information comes in, I will continue to communicate it to our parish. Be assured that Fr. Brian and I are praying for you. Please pray for us and our parish family.

God bless,

Fr. Joe

To access our webpage and the livestream please visit www.noolp.org.