

April 23, 2020

Dear Nativity Parishioners:

It is Thursday afternoon as I write this weekly update to our parish. I have a few thoughts that I would like to share with you this week.

I want to remind everyone that we are blessed at Nativity to be able to live-stream our Masses and other events. Not every parish has this capability. There have been so many positive responses from those who tune into the live feed from our parish. These comments come both from parishioners and non-parishioners.

I have noticed a little online community forming among the people who usually log on to the daily Mass each morning at 8am. I think it is a great way to reach out to one another through the parish.

With that in mind, I was wondering how we can broaden that outreach from our parish to others who may not be able to log on to the Masses at Nativity. One of our parishioners asked me last night about this very thing. How can we make our parish family still feel connected?

Here are a few suggestions:

I recently sent out a parish-wide mailing through the United States Postal Service. I did this because I realized that not all of our people are online or even have computers. Therefore, this weekly communication never gets to them. I received several responses back in the mail thanking me for including them. So, how can we communicate better?

One thought I have is this: If you live at Ann's Choice and can view these communications, and you have a neighbor that cannot, maybe you can print it out and share it with them. Or if you live on a particular street in the parish and you have a neighbor who is not online, you can print it and share it with them.

Another suggestion is this: If you know a parishioner who lives alone and you think that person would benefit from the parish reaching out to them, you can call the Nativity Parish Office and let us know. Then we can follow up with a phone call to that person.

Along those lines, you can do that outreach yourself. If you have someone in mind who is lonely or isolated during this time, you can call them as one parishioner to another and let them know they are not forgotten at Nativity.

I would ask that if you do that, please let us know here at Nativity so that we can do a follow up as well.

If you could spread the word about Flocknote to others who are not currently signed up, that would be a great help. This is the chief means of communication for the parish right now, especially since there are no weekly bulletins being printed. The sign-up instructions are on the homepage of our website at [noolp.org](http://noolp.org).

I mentioned this at Mass this morning to the online group, but I also want to share it with the broader parish. Yesterday, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia hosted an online meeting for all pastors and parish leaders to discuss what it will look like when we reopen our churches. They are calling this initiative, **Arise – Restoring Catholic Life after the Pandemic**.

Although there wasn't much that they could share with us yesterday, the positive message is that we are starting a discussion on how we will reopen our churches to the Faithful. This also means there is an end in sight and we are now looking to the next step in the process. That is good news!

The leaders of the Archdiocesan effort are soliciting ideas from us as they develop a plan. The caveat is that, for now, the end date for the stay at home order is in place until May 8th. That date could be extended. However, the fact that plans are being developed now points to the end of this separation from the Mass.

On another note, the annual Mass in honor of the Feast Day of Saint Gianna will take place as scheduled on April 28th, at 7pm in Nativity of Our Lord Church. It will be streamed live for all who want to participate. Even though those who are so faithful and devoted to the Shrine here at Nativity cannot attend, I did not want to see this Mass not celebrated this year.

Today, we posted a Novena to Saint Joseph leading up to the Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker on May 1st. Please see the homepage of our website for the novena. Please visit our website often for updated spiritual resources and opportunities.

Remember that our church is open every day for personal prayer during this crisis. The Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar from 9am to 7pm most days. Funeral Masses may interrupt that schedule, but we will try to inform you of that ahead of time.

Be assured of my continued prayers for you during this time of separation. Please keep Fr. Brian and I in your prayers as well.

God bless,

Fr. Joe