

March 23, 2020

Dearest Parishioners,

It is with a heavy heart and tremendous sadness that I convey to you that the Diocese has extended its restriction on public masses until April 24th, unless retracted sooner. This would obviously include the most solemn celebration of the Easter Triduum and Easter Sunday. To my knowledge, in the entire history of the Church, the faithful have never been barred by the Church herself from the celebration of these most sacred days. My soul is truly in pain as I cannot fathom this unprecedented decision. I understand the fear, confusion, and desperate attempts to stave off this epidemic, and therefore I can only pray that this is the right decision.

We will continue to have adoration with confessions this week from 5-6PM in the church and the church remains open during the day. On Wednesday, the Feast of the Annunciation, we will have Benediction as well. We will also continue to pray the Angelus at 6PM. Please continue to practice social distancing of at least six feet. I will also be placing hand sanitizer on the penitent side of the confessional for those who wish to use that and have added multiple layers of cloth between the penitent and myself to restrict any kind of possible transmission. I myself am in good health with no symptoms of anything and I pray that all of you are feeling the same.

Like unfortunately many of you, no doubt, I find myself effectively out of work. I continue to offer mass privately with Ben Armentrout every day for the intention that was already scheduled and for the people of the parish on Sundays, but there is a heavy weight on my heart when I look out and see a dark and empty church. My only solace is that outside the beautiful confines of our church, the parish continues to thrive in the homes of all of you. My vocation is that of a total giving of self to the Church and her people, and being restrained from essentially doing that is taking its toll. I say this, not looking for sympathy, but rather for prayers; prayers for your priests throughout the country that are struggling uniquely with this present crisis.

When the city of Rome was sacked in 410, St. Augustine told refugees who had believed the city to be eternal that they were citizens of the heavenly city of Jerusalem. He said that since the time of Adam our loyalties had been divided between heaven and earth, and that as long we remember that we are ultimately citizens of something that is eternal, then no matter what earthly horror befell us, we would never need to truly despair. These words ring truer today than ever in my lifetime as we look at a world in silent chaos. But our faith should never waiver and our resolve should never be stronger than it is today because we believe and know that our true home, our true dwelling of peace, lies not in this world, but in the world to come, should we remain faithful to the lives we're called to live.

Be strong, be faithful, and be vigilant in prayer. My prayers are with you always.

Your servant in Christ,
Fr. Koster