



SACRED HEART CHURCH

March 31, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

Who on earth would have thought that we and the entire world would go without the public celebration of the mass for more than three weeks in a row? This insidious and treacherous virus that has consumed so many thousands of human lives continues to choke us down with its gripping hands as the number of people infected soars higher and higher each day around the globe.

Adhering to the words of Pope Francis, *“Faith begins when we realize we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we flounder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with Him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God’s strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies”*, let us remain united in Spirit.

We embark on the most spectacular week of the liturgical year, the Holy Week, but in a very different way this year. We WILL have the services on those special days, with the restrictions in place, meaning we will have limited liturgical ministers to assist me in celebrating the masses and the services.

On Palm Sunday, the palms will be blessed and kept in the vestibule of the church for you to pick up from Noon to 4 pm. You can also pick them up in the office building through the back door from 9 am to 2 pm on Tuesday and Wednesday of the Holy Week.

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Sample on Holy Thursday with few priests to join him; all the priests of the archdiocese will join him via zoom to renew their priestly promises. The Holy Oils will be blessed during that mass and they will be distributed to the Vicars who then will distribute to the parishes in their respective vicariates. There will be a mass in our parish with few ministers; but there will be NO washing of the feet and no procession.

On Good Friday, during the liturgical service, after I venerate the cross, the ministers will not venerate but will respectfully bow; and a special intention will be added to the General Prayers.

On Holy Saturday, NO sacraments will be celebrated during the Easter Vigil. The Elect will have a separate celebration at a later time during the Easter season. On Easter Sunday, we will offer the mass with few ministers.

Holy Week schedule of events in our parish:

Tuesday through Thursday, the chapel will again be available for those who want to make a private visit to the Blessed Sacrament; please ring doorbell in the office and come through the back door and respect the directives for social distancing and other considerations.

Please do not hesitate to call me to make appointments for confessions.

NO adoration on Friday and Saturday. We may resume after Easter.

Finally, it is again so spiritually disturbing not to come together to celebrate the glory of our Lord's resurrection (Easter) as we normally do. Nevertheless, we will continue to grow in our spirit of union and solidarity with the power of our Risen Lord who won the victory over death. May the joy which He brings us even in these dark moments, show us the light and enlighten our minds and hearts, especially in our efforts to face this situation together!

Let me add the prayer of Pope Francis:

“Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter’s rock-solid faith, I would like to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. May God’s blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: “Do not be afraid” (Mt 28:5). And we, together with Peter, “cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us” (cf. 1 Pet 5:7).

Have a Blessed Easter!

United in the Risen Lord,

Fr. Amal