

March 19, 2020

My Dear Friends in Christ,

Perhaps one of the most beautiful stories in all of Scripture is the story we know of as Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors (Genesis, chapters 37-45). Within it we see God at work, despite the brothers of Joseph and their best efforts to the contrary. God, knowing the future needs of the Hebrew people when the famine hits, takes their terrible decision to sell Joseph into slavery and redeems it, making what was meant for destruction instead into an act of preservation. What was meant to cripple instead gave life.

I write to you today on the Feast of St. Joseph. Not the Joseph I wrote about above, but instead the step-father of Jesus. Joseph, the patron and protector of the Universal Church. Joseph, the patron of the sick and of a happy death. And I find that incredibly consoling right now, in that we are in need of protection. And we need a patron to assist us in this time of sickness, anxiety and yes, death.

As I suspect most of you are aware by now, Bishop Ricken recently suspended all public Masses and gatherings within the Diocese of Green Bay until mid-April, at which time the situation will be reassessed. This is unprecedented in the life of our diocese. Make no mistake, the Lent that you and I are going through right now will most certainly lead to the resurrection of Easter – but neither one will be celebrated liturgically this year. In many ways the Lent you and I had planned was taken over by an event we didn't have on our radar. But that doesn't mean that it won't be redeeming. And that doesn't mean that, perhaps, it won't be the most life-changing Lent we've ever lived.

In an effort to walk together as a community during this time of social distance, the staff of our three linked parishes has come up with a number of ideas to assist us in our walk of faith this Lent and beyond. The absence of the Eucharist as our Daily Bread does not mean Christ does not walk with us at this time. To the contrary! We simply need to look in other places. I invite you to see the attached sheet for suggestions on how we can continue to be Christ for one another during this present moment – and how Christ, and His Church, continues to walk with us in our time of need.

My friends, this may not have been the Lent we asked for, but it is the Lent we have been given. For just as Christ knew what the Hebrew people needed in the time of Joseph, he knows what you and I need today as well. We may not be able to see it in the midst of our famine, our fear, our anxiety. But God does. Let that be enough. He goes ahead of us and can redeem all things, even viruses, making good come from the worst of situations. We are in the best of hands and He walks with us through this dark valley. We need not be afraid, for He goes before us always.

St. Joseph, protector and patron of the Universal Church, pray for us. In hope, I remain,

Joseph Zenk
Pastoral Leader
Holy Rosary Catholic Church
St. Ann Catholic Church
Ss. Peter & Paul Catholic Church

- Church buildings will be open on a rotating basis from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday for private (not public!) prayer. *Holy Rosary*: Wednesday & Saturday. *St. Ann*: Tuesday & Friday. *Ss. Peter & Paul*: Monday & Thursday.
- Ss. Peter & Paul will also be open 9:00 a.m. – Noon on Sunday mornings
- The Eucharist will be exposed during these times of private prayer for adoration. Rosaries, Stations of the Cross booklets and other prayer items will be set out to assist you in private prayer. These items are yours to keep and take home once you have touched them.
- Deacon Randy Jaeckels, Deacon Dennis Bennin or Joe Zenk will be available at each one of these times/locations that the churches will be open, in case anyone wishes to have a pastoral conversation or is in need of prayer. We will be seated in the church. Come see us.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be celebrated twice each week, with a screen being used for distance. *Holy Rosary* – Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m.; *Ss. Peter & Paul* – Sundays at 9:00 a.m.
- Each week, Fr. Carl will celebrate the Sunday Mass which will be recorded and aired via our parish website(s). We have created a YouTube channel specifically for this endeavor (log on at www.sppkiel.org) It may take a while for us to do this well, but look for it soon.
- Joe Zenk will have a daily podcast (Cup o’ Joe) in which he will read the Gospel for the day, give a few thoughts on the reading and conclude with a decade of the Rosary. The plan is to have it both on www.sppkiel.org as well as itunes. Listen at home or on the go.
- All three parishes will be supplying bags of Grab & Go food for ANY families/couples/individuals in need. No questions asked. Simply take what you need. If the supply runs low, we will restock. They can be found on the porch of the parish center at St. Ann, on the stairs of the rectory at Holy Rosary and in the brown bin located outside of the parish center at Ss. Peter & Paul.
- Danielle, Lindsay and Laura will be sending (via email) daily faith-building activities for our faith formation families to discuss and engage with one another on a deeper level. If you have not received these suggestions or would like to receive one (even if not a faith formation family), contact us.
- We will be distributing cards to the homebound and those in nursing homes. If you have a card you would like delivered, drop it by any one of our parish offices
- Anointing of the Sick will be provided on an *emergency basis*. Contact Joe at 920.918.0903
- Parish offices will be closed for the time being, but staff will be in frequently and checking messages daily. If you need anything, call and leave a message. Someone will get back to you promptly.
- Bulletins will continue to be uploaded to our websites and printed for weekly physical pick-up.
- If you wish to continue making contributions to your parish, our Lenten Project (benefitting the three local food pantries), or your respective Building & Grounds fund, gifts can be mailed, dropped into the metal boxes in each wing of church (Holy Rosary) or use the bill pay option through your bank.
- I remind you of a number of great offerings you can access while at home, such as: Formed; Word on Fire; usccb.org for daily readings; Magnificat (us.magnificat.net) or americancatholic.org for morning/evening prayer, daily readings and saint of the day; Apps such as laudate or ibreviary for readings, morning/evening prayer, saint of the day
- Sunday Masses on TV, such as WFRV Channel 5 @ 10:30 a.m. (w/ Bishop Ricken); WBAY Channel 2 @ 5:30 a.m.; CW14 @ 8:00 a.m. Also aired on Relevant Radio (1050 AM) at 9:00 a.m.
- Daily Mass can be livestreamed Monday – Friday (relevantradio.com/faith/daily-mass-video/)
- Daily Rosary is prayed on Relevant Radio every day at 7:00 p.m. (1050 AM)
- Finally – in this moment when the Body and Blood of Christ is absent from us in Eucharistic form, yearn for it. Make that what you long for in the New Life of Easter. In its place, make what is called a “Spiritual Communion” – a choice to invite Christ daily into your heart and allow that location to become His tabernacle. As Archbishop Gomez suggested, it is as simple as this: “I wish, my Lord, to receive you with the purity, humility, and devotion with which your most holy mother received you, with the spirit and fervor of the saints. Make your home in me.”

Lockdown

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood

So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome

and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours
in a new way

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.

So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.

But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.

But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.

But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic

The birds are singing again

The sky is clearing,

Spring is coming,

And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul

And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,

Sing.

