

Spiritual Letter From Fr. Kris

Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter to you in a very difficult and uncertain time. Many of us might be locked in our houses, worried about Coronavirus, and are afraid to go out to fulfill our daily tasks and routines. All we hear lately on the news or read in social media is related to Coronavirus. Many of these news stories are fake or exaggerated. So, we shouldn't believe everything we read or hear from others. I also encourage you not to share with others everything that you read 'out there' because it is then so easy to make others feel scared or even panicked. All we need to do is be patient. We need to pray for the world and for each other, and to trust that God will help us to get through these difficult days.

I am also very saddened by the fact that we priests are unable to celebrate the Holy Mass with our parishioners. However, we do say Masses every day and we do pray for the daily Mass intentions and for all the people of our parish. I don't know how the celebration of Christ's Passion and Resurrection will look this year. Most of our parish activities have been either canceled or postponed to another time. Much depends on the decisions of our Cardinal and the Archdiocese of Chicago. Whatever we hear or find out, we will try to inform you through our bulletins that you can still pick up at the church or read via our webpage.

A Reminder: The church will be open every day for private prayer and adoration (Monday through Friday from 4pm to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday from 9am to Noon), but I encourage you to keep the suggested rules, namely, stay at a distance of 10' from other people and if you see that there is a larger gathering of people in the church when you are visiting, perhaps you may reconsider coming in and plan to come back later.

We continue to receive many questions from our parishioners, questions like: when will we bring public Masses back?

Why is there no daily Mass even if there are less than 250 people? Can a priest come and celebrate Mass at my house? How can I receive the Eucharist? There are many more excellent and important questions but for most of them we can't find the full answer. Everyone is doing his or her best to contain this virus. I personally may have some doubts, but whether I agree with the decisions being made or not, as a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago that promised obedience to his bishop, I need to follow his guidance and the protocols worked out for all of us and for our safety.

On another note, we need to remember that Christ is present not only in the Church's building, but in each one of us, and He is there wherever we need Him, even in the simplest situations of our lives. He addressed this in the Gospel a couple weeks ago when He met the Samaritan woman at the well and changed her heart. We need to trust in His presence in our hearts, in our relatives and neighbors and in our homes. So, pray to Him often, talk to Him and bring to Him all of your concerns. We can also make a "spiritual communion" by joining our hearts with the heart of Christ.

I have heard at least a few times that what is happening right now is simply God's punishment for people's sins. How wrong it is to think that! We believe in God who loves us unconditionally. He loves us more than anything else, so He would never punish us even for our greatest sins. He is not a revengeful God. Our God is a Merciful God, and we always need to remember that. And in these difficult times we are witnessing many wonderful things that are happening. People are praying more, praying for each other, helping each other. We are showing a yearning for the Eucharist, something that in normal times many of us take for granted. And all of us are slowing down our lives. So, God is truly present now, especially in His people.

Let us continue to trust that this virus will

disappear soon, so we all can go back to our daily routines; let us pray for those who are infected, may God bring them strength and health; let us pray for those who have died, not only the victims of coronavirus but for all of our deceased brothers and sisters, because they also need our prayers; let us pray for all our first responders- firefighters, police officers, paramedics and for our doctors and nurses who offer their time and knowledge risking their own health and safety for the well-being of others. And in the end, instead of being angry with the situation, let us join our leaders everywhere and be thankful to God for all the good things that are still happening in this confused world right now.

I'd like to close with a prayer that His Holiness, Pope Francis, shared at a Mass on March 10, in which he calls upon the intercession of the Blessed Mother in this health crisis:

O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon Himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

And wash your hands!
Fr. Kris