

# Catholic Communities of the ASHLAND CLUSTER



Ashland • Odanah • Moquah • Dauby • Ino  
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www.ourladyashland.faith

March 23, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

The corona virus pandemic is now in our community and making demands on our movements, gatherings and even our devotions and spirituality. Let us take courage! With God's protection and guidance, we should be able to conquer our fears and live a life full of determination. In the Scripture, we can find the courage God desires us to have. The Psalmist says: "Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord." (Psalm 31:24). St. Paul exhorts us: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and his mighty power." (Ephesians 6:10).

As a cluster, our top priority remains the health and safety of our families, children, the vulnerable of our community and all people around us. We need to cooperate and work with the government in the mission of protecting the vulnerable from the coronavirus pandemic.

This is my pastoral letter of communication as your pastor, to get connected with your families and everyone. This letter is also coming from the fruitful discussions from the Parish Leadership meeting held on March 17.

## 1. Bishop James Powers' directives for the parishioners:

- (letter dated March 12, 2020) "I am Dispensing from the Sunday Obligation to attend Mass for anyone, who for whatever reason is afraid they might contract COVID-19. I strongly encourage our elderly, very young, and anyone with a compromised immune system to accept this dispensation. For those who elect not to attend Mass, I suggest your gather as family and watch Mass on television, pray the rosary, read and reflect on readings of the day, or perform some other act of prayer or worship."
- (letter dated March 17, 2020) Effective Wed, March 18, I am suspending the public celebration of Masses until further notice. This action is something I take very seriously. The celebration of the Eucharist is the "indispensable source and summit" of the Christian life. Historically, in times of crisis, the faithful naturally turn to the Church for comfort and direction, and we need to do whatever we can to support our people. Therefore, although the public celebration of the Mass is suspended, I ask that we as bishop and priests, the spiritual shepherds of the Diocese, continue to celebrate weekday and Sunday Masses including the Sunday 'pro Populo' Mass as required by canon law. I also ask, that where possible, our churches remain open at least part of the day for private prayer and that you encourage your people to reserve some part of their day for private prayer and devotions.

Let us hold each other in prayer during this time of concern. Together, we can pray this Spiritual Act of Communion."

### An Act of Spiritual Communion

*My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.*

## 2. As a parish cluster family what we can do:

- The Clergy (only) will continue to offer a daily Mass with intentions for the parish. If you have any intentions and special prayer requests, send these to the office.
- The church (OLL) will remain open from 8:00 am thru 5:00 pm for personal prayer and devotions.
- Confessions are available through arrangement with Fr. Jerome.
- The parish bulletin will continue to be published each week – available on line on our website ([www.ourladyashland.faith](http://www.ourladyashland.faith)). Printed copies will also be available in the north church (facing the lake) entry.

- You may receive a phone call from the parish office to get you connected.
- WWMD Catholic radio 95.3 FM in Ashland is now on the air. Relevant radio broadcasts Mass daily at 12:00 noon and on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am. There are also Masses broadcast on TV from Duluth and online on EWTN.
- The parish office will continue to be staffed, but we encourage everyone to either call on the phone, or send emails. Staff members are altering their schedules to support public health efforts. Messages will be returned as soon as possible.
- **Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School** – Principal and staff are making all efforts to get connected, informed and learning during these days off. Support your kids and school.
- **Religious Formation and Youth Ministry** – BE NOT AFRAID. As Saint John Paul II reaffirmed, your family and home are the DOMESTIC CHURCH. Never before have we seen a more literal reminder of this. We urge you to utilize this opportunity to re-orient your family upward & seek to *encounter* Jesus as often as possible. We specifically ask of you & your children:
  - ◊ Make Sunday a *holy day* in your home/domestic church. Watch or listen to Mass in your home every Sunday, discuss the readings & how they apply to your lives, & add other devotionals or traditions you see fit.
  - ◊ PLEASE log on to **formed.org** if you haven't yet. Very helpful resource to infuse our Catholic faith into your home & continue the Religious Formation of your kids and yourself. Constant updates & livestreams of world/nation-wide prayer specific to Coronavirus. (Especially tune into "Faith at Home" section, YDisciple for teens, Opening the Word Weekly Reflections to go along with Sunday Mass readings, and Lent section-putting special emphasis on faith in your home during Holy Week.)
  - ◊ Free subscription when you click >sign-up >I belong to a parish >type Our Lady of the Lake, Ashland, WI under "find your parish."
  - ◊ Pray. Both individually & as a family. Prioritize daily prayer... make it a non-negotiable. (Especially pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet & Rosary). Pray the phrase, "*Jesus, I trust in you,*" x3 throughout the day. Free access to Magnificat spiritual guide to help develop your prayer life at <https://us.magnificat.net/>
- Knights of Columbus – If you need light shopping, Call KC members: Kevin 715-209-4749; Clarence 715-292-1160; Mike 715-292-0740; Bob 715-209-1021 & Vince 701-330-5078.
- Even in the absence of our normal parish activities and daily lives, we ask you to keep the parish's finances in mind. We still have bills to pay and our staff payroll to maintain. Your continued and ongoing contributions to the parish are greatly appreciated. **Here is what you can do:**
  - \* use your Sunday envelope by mail/drop to the parish office
  - \* Electronically giving - Free automatic bank transfer (EFT/ACH)/ or by credit/debit card by clicking on the "Vanco" tab on the parish website
  - \* Special giving to the School Annual fund campaign, and the Diocesan CSA still need your support.

If you have any questions/requests/suggestions, you can reach: Parish office: (106 2<sup>nd</sup> N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. E. Ashland, WI 54806) 682-7620; [ollcatholicchurch@ourladycc.org](mailto:ollcatholicchurch@ourladycc.org); Fr. Jerome: 715-415-5375; [jeromecmf@gmail.com](mailto:jeromecmf@gmail.com); Ric Johnson (Bus. Admin) 715-685-1728; [ricjohnson@ourladycc.org](mailto:ricjohnson@ourladycc.org); Betty (Principal) 682-7622; [principal@ourladycc.org](mailto:principal@ourladycc.org); Anna Richardson (religious formation): [reiform@ourladycc.org](mailto:reiform@ourladycc.org); Tim Mika (Family & Youth): [youthministry@ourladycc.org](mailto:youthministry@ourladycc.org)

Let us not lose heart and grow weary. Instead let us re-ignite our Christian faith by taking the required precautionary steps to face this pandemic caused by a coronavirus, and reaching out with mutual support and help, and above all, by manifesting our unshakable trust in the indomitable grace of God, and the powerful intercession of Mother Mary.

Yours in Christ & Mary,

Fr. Jerome D'Souza  
Parochial Administrator  
Ashland Cluster Parishes