

29 April, 2020.

My dear Parishioners,

The peace of the Risen Lord be with you and your loved ones. We have never experienced an Easter like this before. It reminds me of the disciples that had to keep indoors because of a “virus” who were Romans who were trying to track and kill them for following Christ. They were filled with fear. And yes, there was great “social distancing” of the disciples of Jesus with everyone else for fear of death. Despite this, discipleship increased day by day.

I hope our faith has grown and we look forward to be together again physically and spiritually as the body of Christ. I believe that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Many people wonder if the Church will ever be the same. It is a difficult question to answer. For certain, our mindsets will change because we will realize that we truly need each other in times of crisis and that everyone is our brother and sister. We will have one common enemy which is indifference, prejudice and racism. Whatever affects others affects all of us. We have to be united and more caring of each other and especially of the environment. There is no other planet that we can relocate to. We have to make our dwelling place, family life, relationships stronger and united.

Our homes have become our little Church. Maybe the abbreviation **BEC** has a greater reality for us now. Our faith survival in the future will be the strength of our Basic Ecclesial Communities. By that I mean the way we communicated through social media and the internet over the past two months. I’ve been inundated with so many WhatsApp messages, fake news and good morning wishes.

For all our Elect who are patiently waiting for their baptism, be assured that the whole Church is praying for you and we are just as excited to welcome you as new members to our big family.

I wish to thank all our generous parishioners that continued to support us especially by bringing food so that the 5 members of the Redemptorist community will be healthy and resilient against Mr. Covid-19 should he come knocking at our door.

Many have asked how we are doing financially without our weekly collections. Well, our staff have to be paid as they will have to manage the church in the absence of the congregation. We have 9 staff members who work diligently behind the scenes to make sure that nothing is neglected. Funeral services are carried out without mass, wakes and congregation in our chapel. The PHDC still carry out their services to the poor and needy because these are hard times for everyone. The poor need their rations and financial support.

For those who wish to continue their monthly contributions please do it online or at the Public Bank. I enclose the reference to our account number: 3096 86 4807.

No one is authorized to collect any money on behalf of the Church.

We are starting our Novena podcast this week because of the many requests for the Redemptorist novenas. We miss preaching as much as you miss the novena devotions. There are many websites available for your Sunday mass and I know that you are spoilt for choices. When you “attend” the mass online, it is important to be prepared spiritually as a family the best way you can. You can also follow all the gestures that are appropriate. This is your time with the Lord. Every diocese provides online masses throughout the whole world.

If you have any enquiries please call the Church in the mornings. For other emergencies, contact your BEC leader. I look forward to celebrating the Eucharist with you when this pandemic is over.

Remember to pray for all front liners, and for those who have lost family members and friends. I commend the doctors, nurses, volunteers and all those that provide for our health and basic essentials at the risk of their own lives. Their dedication and sacrifice are so inspiring.

When we finally resume mass, you may experience something different. We may have to implement social-distancing by marking the pews. Masses may have to be bi-lingual so that you may attend any mass as the church will not be able to accommodate everyone because of the limitation of sitting space.

We remember our Muslim brothers and sisters in this month of Ramadan. It will be different for them like it was for us during our celebration of Lent and Easter. We pray for the whole world especially those who have lost their jobs and suffering great financial losses.

Take good care of yourselves and everyone in your family especially the elderly and children.

May the peace of Christ live in our hearts now and always.

In the Redeemer,
Fr. Patrick Massang C.Ss.R.
Parish Priest, OMPH

