

13 March 2020

Dear Beloved Parishioners of Our Lady Queen of Heaven:

What challenging times we live in! In my lifetime, I've never had the experience of any kind of pandemic nor the stoppage of Mass in any parish in which I've ever participated. Only from a deep faith in Christ and a profound love for God's people did Archbishop Paul Etienne give the directive to halt the celebration of Mass and cease other gatherings. It was concern for the "common good" that motivated our shepherd in his recent declaration.

In Catholic Social teaching, "the principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must be related if it is to attain its fullest meaning, stems from the dignity, unity and equality of all people. According to its primary and broadly accepted sense, *the common good* indicates *"the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily"* (**Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church**, #164).

Thus we fully support Archbishop Paul in his decision to suspend all masses/worship and non-essential gatherings.

However, our parish is not closed. Pastoral care is available. We will re-open our church, from 10am to 2pm, starting Wednesday, March 18 through Friday, March 20th. Thereafter as long as Archbishop Etienne's directive remains in place, every Monday through Friday our church will be open for prayer. Fr. Vinner is also available for the anointing of the sick as he will keep the Blessed Sacrament and the Oil of the Infirm with him at all times. Thus, if anyone calls our office and expresses their need, or sadness at not being able to receive the Eucharist, Fr. Vinner will be happy to pray with you, hear your confession, anoint, and offer Communion. If you know anyone, who needs anointing, who won't receive this information, please inform that person(s).

Nonetheless, there will be some protocols that I would ask you to observe.

- If you are sick in any way, please stay home.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before you come; wash your hands when you return home.
- Stay 6 - 10 ft. away from others in the pews.
- Due to our inability to sanitize the Blessed Sacrament chapel space, that will be closed – please respect this.
- Since others will be coming and going, there will be silent prayer only. There will be no public prayer, e.g. the public recitation of the rosary, litanies, novenas, the Divine Mercy chaplet, or Sacred Heart chaplet, etc.

- Fr. Vinner will be able to hear confessions on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10-11am. However, penitents must remain 6 ft. away from Father.
- All paper, missalettes, cards, etc. will be removed when you reenter the nave of the church proper. Please do not leave any papers or prayer cards or any type behind. What you bring with you, take home as you depart.
- Daily at 2pm, Jerry Bradshaw (our Maintenance Supervisor), will sanitize the church and the bathrooms. Please depart promptly at 2.00pm so Jerry can do his work.

The suspension of Masses means that we will have far less financial support for our parish. It is a critical time for employers and employees in profit and non-profit businesses and foundations. We too still have bills to pay, projects to accomplish, salaries, and benefits to provide. Please remain faithful to your Stewardship pledge. With no Masses, please consider the following suggestions:

1. Please mail-in your weekly envelope or drop it off at the parish.
2. Please consider the following electronic option:
Online Giving – connect at our parish website and click on the [green button](#) and follow the prompts to set this up (you decide the frequency and amount of your giving (weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.).

As the whole world and our region struggles with the Coronavirus, our parish and our Archdiocese has not been spared in dealing with this complicated public and world-wide health challenge. Please pray for all those affected by this virus, those who have died, and those first responders and medical personnel who put themselves on the line to minister to others in this crisis.

In a recent letter to pastoral leaders and schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle, Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg, offered this prayer asking Mary, Our Lady of Seattle, to intercede for us. Please consider praying this prayer daily.

Holy Mary, we come before you as spiritual children in great need, seeking your intercession, and asking that your mantle of love surround us to console, protect, and lead us to your Son, Jesus.

We entrust all of God's family, especially the Church in Western Washington, into your immaculate hands. With your son Jesus's gentle power you can *undo any knot* in your church, and in the lives of believers who entrust themselves to your care.

Today I especially entrust to you [*mention request/Coronavirus here*], and I ask that – through your intercession, and that of St. James, our guardian angels, and the faithful in our Archdiocese – we may be free from every spiritual and temporal ill, and be safely led to encounter your Son's merciful, Sacred Heart.

Our Lady of Seattle, Undoer of Knots, pray for us!

Please keep our staff and all our sister parishes in the Archdiocese in prayer during this challenging time. Be assured of my prayer for you.

May God's love, His hope, and His mercy be with you!

Deacon Jim Fish
Pastoral Coordinator
Our Lady Queen of Heaven