

A word about the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on parish life:

Here at St Paul Parish our primary goal is the spiritual and physical health of our parish family. Typically families need to spend time together, and during this coronavirus pandemic that is becoming a challenge. We wanted to draw your attention to the following:

1) Our parish is following the directives of the Archdiocese of Newark during liturgy. Receiving our Lord's Precious Blood in the chalice has been suspended at all Masses. **Please remember:** receiving Christ in the Sacred Host during Holy Mass is receiving Him in His fullness, truly present Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. We ask those who typically receive on the tongue to consider receiving in the hand during this time as a sign of charity and concern toward their brothers and sisters in Christ. Those who choose not to receive at all can very appropriately say the following prayer from their pew: "My Jesus I believe that you are present in this 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 let me be parted from you. Amen"

2) At the sign of peace we ask parishioners to wish God's peace to one another without physical contact.

3) Since some have expressed concerns about picking up missalettes or touching the pews in front of them, our director of music will play music that is very familiar to us or with a simple refrain we can sing without picking up missalettes. Remember, we do not really need to read along with scripture readings, Christ is truly present in the proclaimed Word which calls for our listening. We will also do our best to wipe down the pews as often as possible. Any volunteers who would like to help us do this regularly are free to contact the parish office.

4) For now we will return to our custom of using baskets with long handles for the collection. The Offertory Procession will include only the collection as an offering to God from His people. Bread and wine will be brought to the altar from the credence table in the sanctuary and not from the back of the church.

5) If you are not feeling well or have any signs or symptoms of illness whatsoever, please do not attend Mass or other parish activities. If you are sick the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is suspended for you. If you have returned from another country recently, or have been in contact with anyone you think is sick, please also refrain from attending Holy Mass until you are certain you are not infected. Those who cannot attend church may fittingly if they choose watch Mass on television and pray the "Prayer for a Spiritual Communion" as noted above.

6) Our Academy building will be cleaned and disinfected over the weekend.

7) Please regularly watch the parish website, social media, and parish app for updated information about any other closures or changes in our parish schedule.

8) God is love, and a parish community is called to be united in His love together as one. Sometimes love is communicated in physical ways, but often love can be communicated in spiritual ways. In fact, this will be the way we will love one another in heaven. May this time when we need to limit our physical contact not be a time that we limit our love. Let us not fear one another but trust in God the creator of all things Who holds our very lives in His hands. Let us recognize our constant call to charity and love toward one another, not in spreading false information, or hoarding, or being closed in upon ourselves. May our hearts and our prayers always move us closer to one another in Spirit and in Truth. And let us pray for those who are ill and for the safety of all those who minister to them, and let us pray for those who do the medical research that will benefit us all. As our beloved patron saint St. Paul tells us: "God works all things for good for those who love Him, for those who are called according to his purpose."