

ST. PAUL R.C. CHURCH

Parish Center Office: 193 Wyckoff Avenue, Ramsey, New Jersey 07446

Tel: 201-327-0976 Fax: 201-327-6197

www.stpaulrcchurch.org

Dear Parish Family,

I and all of your priests here in St. Paul Rectory send along our greetings and prayerful regards during this unique period of time in our history. It is a time filled with challenges, and one also filled with graces if we know where to seek them. It is my prayer that each of us will use this time to draw spiritual profit from the time we have been given, a profit that comes to us from a deep awareness of Christ among us even now. I have never before seen so many opportunities for growth in spirituality and understanding of our Catholic faith presented in creative ways through technology. But the “old fashioned” ways (that are not so old fashioned after all) are still powerful: get out your Bibles and read, pray the rosary, get a good spiritual book. Allow God to guide you and be open to His initiative in your life.

I understand that the inability to receive the Sacraments is a tremendous void in our lives. Christ left us the Sacraments as the way for us to encounter Him. We are essentially a sacramental people, and without them many undoubtedly feel like branches in some ways disconnected from the vine. It is my hope that all of this will not be for nothing: that we will all recognize just how desperately we need Christ in the Sacraments, most especially in the Blessed Sacrament (because while all the other Sacraments point to Christ and give His grace, the Blessed Sacrament is Christ Himself, the “source and summit of the Christian life”). Keep hungering for Christ! Keep prayerful and attentive to the other ways He is coming to comfort you! There have been times and places in history where Catholics have been denied the Eucharist, where priests and sacramental life were outlawed and dangerous to seek, and some even gave their lives to have the opportunity to secretly attend Holy Mass or at least try. Nevertheless, even in these times of sacramental drought, people became saints because they remained in love with Christ and His Church and faithful to their call.

All that being said, I wanted to take this opportunity to inform you of some further communication we have received from the office of Cardinal Tobin: effective immediately....

- Wakes and funerals must be postponed until further notice. Burials may take place with only the priest;
- All baptisms must be postponed until further notice (with the exception of extreme emergency);
- All weddings are postponed until further notice;
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is suspended until further notice (with the exception of extreme emergency);
- All churches and adoration chapels must be closed and locked until further notice. Private prayer in any parish building must be discontinued until further notice.

I am certain the Cardinal issues these directives with a heavy heart, but also one that is hopeful for the future. Please know that we will continue to live-stream Masses and other events as possible. Imagine the day when the Beloved will say to us: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.... Let me see your countenance, let me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice and your face is beautiful.” (Song of Solomon 2:12) On that day, the doors to God’s Temple will open and Christ will feed us with His Body and Blood again, but perhaps we will be a bit different, perhaps we will finally be more aware of just how tremendous a Gift we have been given, and Sunday mornings will no longer just be another day for sports or work or sleep, but will become once again the Lord’s day when we rush to His house before anything else and receive Him with joy because we remember just how sad it was when we could not! Let us remain faithful as one parish family, united in His love wherever we are!

In Peace of Jesus and Mary,

Father John