

Dear Parishioners,

I am back from taking a few days off. It was nice to get away and visit with family and friends, but it is even nicer to return and get back into parish life. Monday morning Mass will resume and we will get back to a normal parish life- or as normal as we can in these difficult times.

The Alleluia Auction is nearing, however due to the restrictions placed on the number of people we can allow, we will be having this year's auction online. If you have questions regarding the auction or have items to be auctioned off, please call the school office. I encourage you to support the auction because this may be the only fundraiser for the school this year! We did have a successful St. Mikes on Spikes and we are still waiting for all the bills to be paid. However, we had to cancel our food truck at the Wheatland Music Festival and I'm not sure if we will have our annual Fish Fry during Lent. Please support this important fundraiser- even if you have not in the past, it is crucial to do so this year. Please return your tickets as soon as possible and even plan to make a donation to the auction. Let's make this year's Alleluia Auction a success.

Also, please make your pledge to the Catholic Services Appeal soon. This annual diocesan collection funds the programs of the diocese- including the formation of priests and seminarians. We need another \$20,000 to reach our target. I am not asking one person to give the money, but if all of us give what we can, I am confident that we can reach our target. Please give this appeal before the Lord in prayer and consider making a pledge soon.

I want to give a shout out to those parishioners who have faithfully stayed home and watched the Mass via television or the internet Sunday after Sunday. I know that it's not like being at the Mass in person and we don't always have the opportunity to go to Mass with slippers and a cup of coffee. I had the opportunity to watch the Chrism Mass from the Cathedral online and I am glad that we are open.

Although there is something missing with Mass on television or the internet, there is power in the Liturgy because it is not bound by time and distance. Even though we are not physically present at the time, we still experience the presence and power of God and the bread and wine still becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus. We desire to share in that Eucharist even though we may not be physically present. Under normal conditions, we would be attending Mass in person, but these are not normal times. When coming to Mass becomes impossible or even dangerous to our health, the Mass that is televised or comes to us online becomes our lifeline to the Body of Christ.

Each time we watch the Mass, we are reminded that these are not normal times and we need to remember all those who are battling to return to normal. For example, the doctors and nurses who put their lives on the line to save us from this deadly virus, the scientists who are working at break neck speed to find a vaccine, those who have the virus and those who have died because of the virus. Trust in God means acting with courage and acting wisely. When you are ready to return to Mass in person, we are here for you.

Just a reminder that our bishop encourages those of us who are out and about to still come to Mass. The dispensation that he recently extended is based on the presumption that we are homebound. If we are going to work or school or even out for dinner, it's time to likewise return to Mass. The Eucharist is first and foremost the most important event in our lives. It supersedes all that

we do. When you attend Mass, registration is required by noon on Friday and a mask must be worn. We need to have a list of those who attended Mass to help with contact tracing in the event that there is a positive case. We are still requiring that you wear a mask to help stop the spread of the virus and the Church is disinfected after each Mass. As you can see, we are doing all we can to make the Liturgy safe for everyone.

Normally, we would be celebrating St. Michael's Feast Day with Mass and other parish activities, however, all that is cancelled. I would encourage you to pray for the needs of the parish. I encourage you to pray the rosary with me at 7:00 p.m. throughout the week. Although we may not be physically present, we can continue to lift up our voices in prayer for one another. Let us ask the Blessed Virgin to guide us through this time of crisis and to lift up each other.

Please be safe, wear a mask and keep socially distant. You are all important to us!

Peace... Fr. Tom