

PASTOR'S UPDATE TO PARISHIONERS – A

WHAT'S IN THIS UPDATE:

- PASTORAL MESSAGE TO PARISHIONERS FROM FR. FERGUSON
- MESSAGE TO OUR PARISH CHILDREN BY “JACKIE”, THE PASTOR’S CAT
- OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECH-BASED MASSES AND DEVOTIONS
- PARISH LOGISTICS
- A NOTE OF CAUTION

PASTORAL MESSAGE TO PARISHIONERS FROM FR. FERGUSON

The Lord be with you! What a week it has been! As I presume most of you know by now, the Coronavirus concerns have caused our Ohio Bishops to take some serious measures to keep us healthy: on Monday afternoon, the Ohio Bishops decided, after meeting with our Governor, to suspend all public Masses up to and through Easter Sunday. If you haven't received this news (which we tried to get out to as many as possible already via e-mail and our website), please see the attached letters from the Ohio Bishops and from me. In my letter, I quote Bishop Brennan from his note to priests regarding how saddened he is by this unprecedented move.

This decision to suspend public Masses is really quite a major adjustment to our lives as Catholics! Obviously, our Bishops had to make a tough choice, and I am sure you join me in supporting them in their attempts to keep our population safe and healthy during the uncertainties of the Coronavirus epidemic. Please pray for our Ohio bishops; they have a tough job as our leaders in the Faith. Bishop Brennan has vowed to keep us posted on developments and ways he plans to support us in this challenging time.

And a challenging time indeed it is for us Catholics! To be unable to physically assemble as the People of God and especially to be unable for the faithful to receive the Lord Jesus physically in the Most Holy Eucharist, the Source and Summit of the Christian life, is contrary to the very fiber of our being as Catholic Christians: the People of the Eucharist! Again, to be clear, our Bishops made the right decision for our health, but as Bishop Brennan just again shared with us priests on e-mail a few moments ago as I am writing this, it pains all of us deeply!

The “silver lining” of the current situation is that it will help all of us to go deeper in our appreciation for the great gift of the Eucharist in our Catholic faith....and therefore the great gift of our Hardin County parishes. Inherently, we “hunger” for the food of eternal life: the Eucharist! It is not normal to be away from food for a lengthy time. The more we lack it, the more we desire it. An analogy to this is the practice of “social-distancing” which we are being asked to observe by our public leaders. Again, we support the reasons, but it gives us a chance to reflect on the fact that “social-distancing” is not normal – as humans, we are “social beings”. Likewise, as Catholics, we are called by Jesus to be a “body of disciples”. We are meant to be “together”, as St. Paul often says, as “parts of a body” physically joined together in harmony. That's the great gift of practicing the Faith in the context of a Catholic parish.

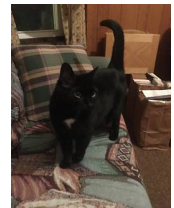
My point is that as difficult and unsettling the current times are, especially being unable to assemble physically for holy worship, I hope that the current situation can lead all of us to go deeper in our hunger and desire for the Eucharist and the physical communal life of our wonderful parishes. And I hope that the current hardships will lead all of us to grow deeper in our spiritual prayer and support for each other as fellow disciples: to hold each other up spiritually in prayer, even if we can't physically interact with each other nearly as much as before. And even though we cannot encounter the Lord Jesus physically in the Eucharist, we know that He is still present to each of us in prayer and grace to support us! As He promised as His last words on Earth, no

matter what, "I will be with you always, until the end of the world!" And as St. John Paul II often said, "Be not afraid!"

In the coming days and weeks, let's keep doing everything we can to foster our Faith in the current difficult circumstances. I will be sending out frequent "Updates to Parishioners" to keep connected with all of you, and these will be posted on both parish websites, on the Ada e-mail list, and on the Kenton Facebook page. PLEASE FORWARD THESE UPDATES TO AS MANY AS POSSIBLE, especially those who may not get on the internet very often. Jackie the Cat will also try to offer some ongoing thoughts for our children.....at least when she is awake! Below, in this Update A, please find information about tech-based Masses and devotions. **WE ARE LOOKING INTO OFFERING A LIVE-STREAMED CLUSTER MASS FROM OUR LADY OF LOURDES EACH SUNDAY**....more information about that is below, as well as how to make a "spiritual communion" when participating in a Mass remotely. Also, please note below important PARISH LOGISTICS.

Thanks for your support, and let's pray for those sick from the Coronavirus, and for all our leaders and health-care providers trying to tackle this epidemic. And let's hold each other in prayer during this unusual Lenten Season, as we unite our sufferings to those of our living Lord Jesus!

-Fr. Bill Ferguson, Pastor



MESSAGE TO OUR PARISH CHILDREN BY "JACKIE", THE PASTOR'S CAT

Hi boys and girls! My name is "Jackie", and, as you know, I am Father Ferguson's cat! This has been a crazy time, hasn't it? Schools are closed, and people are staying home, and it's harder to go out and do fun things because of a bad virus that's going around trying to make people sick. It can be a little scary to see so many changes, but the good thing about it is that the grown-ups around you are trying to keep you safe and healthy! That's a great relief – knowing how much the grown-ups like your parents and teachers and our community leaders love you and care for you. It's like when I see Father Ferguson keeping me, as a cat, inside my house a lot of times because he wants to keep me safe and healthy from a lot of things that could harm me like wild dogs or raccoons. I'm glad Father Ferguson tries to keep me safe. But I know this is a tough time. Just like you, I can't wait until I can get back to Kitty School to see all my cat friends; and I can't wait to go out again to our local pizza shop and get my favorite: the extra large with half pepperoni and half mouse meat. Yum! Stay safe and healthy, and pray to Jesus today to thank Him for the special grown-ups in your life who love you and care for you! Have a "purr"-fect week!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECH-BASED MASSES AND DEVOTIONS

The following are tech-based options for Masses and Devotions:

SUNDAY MASS:

- WE ARE LOOKING INTO SETTING UP A LIVE-STREAMED CLUSTER MASS FROM OUR LADY OF LOURDES EACH SUNDAY; Ada has a camera and smart TV and internet connection already in place in its church, so we are hoping to be able to live-stream one Mass each Sunday from Ada for the benefit of anyone in our cluster. Of course, this Mass will need to be closed to on-site participants except the clergy and the tech person, but if we can get the tech logistics worked out, I will give you more information in the next Update to Parishioners.
- Also, Bishop Brennan shared the following tech options for remote Mass viewing:

St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820 in Central Ohio, FM 88.3 in Southern Ohio and www.stgabrielradio.com on the web) broadcasts Mass from St. Joseph's Cathedral (AM Radio) and St. Mary's in Portsmouth (FM Radio) on Sunday mornings at 10:30 AM. Sunday Masses are also viewable on both WWHO-TV Columbus and WHIZ-TV Zanesville in addition to other cable stations.

WEEKDAY MASS:

- Bishop Brennan will celebrate daily Mass from the Cathedral which will be broadcast on St. Gabriel Radio at 12:05 p.m.
- Ann Johnson of OLL says that Notre Dame is going to livestream daily Mass at 11:30 AM throughout the week. Here's a link to their webpage: https://www.google.com/url?q=https://campusministry.nd.edu/mass-worship/basilica-of-the-sacred-heart/watch-mass/&source=gmail&ust=1584562136723000&usg=AFQjCNH2BSbXwE24bundbEK_QsbvXjGocQ Contact Ann for questions.

DAILY DEVOTIONS:

- A group of families from OLL has just started a tech-based group prayer session scheduled for every day at 3:00 pm accessible via phone or computer, making use of our common devotions such as the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Rosary, and Stations of the Cross. This opportunity is open to anyone at both parishes. To learn how to connect up with this daily communal prayer, contact Steve Johnson at sjohnsonpv@gmail.com.

ARTICLE ON HOW TO MAKE A 'SPIRITUAL COMMUNION'

Please check out this article on what a "Spiritual Communion" is, and how it can help us now that Masses are suspended.

<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/armstrong/if-you-cant-receive-communion-make-a-spiritual-communion>

PARISH LOGISTICS

- **Parish Offices** are still open: Ada – Deb is still on duty as normal; Kenton – Kathy is on site 9-12, M-R; working from home in afternoons.
- **Church Availability** for Personal Prayer: Ada – church is still open 9 am to 8 pm each day; Kenton – due to greater local security concerns, please check in with Kathy 9-12 to access church.
- **Confessions:** contact either priest for special appointment

A NOTE OF CAUTION

As we all know, this is a difficult and stressful time, and may last quite a while depending on the course of the coronavirus. There are a lot of important things which will need to be communicated over the upcoming days and weeks regarding parish life. At the same time, more people will be spending time on social media, including Facebook, e-mail, etc. PLEASE help me as Pastor to make sure that only accurate information is being circulated on matters pertaining to parish life. I will take the lead on sending out regular updates clearly labelled as such, and I will ask my staff to try to consolidate as many updates as possible into my regular communications. These will be posted on both our websites (by Deb and Brian), on the Ada e-mail list (by Deb), and the official Kenton Facebook page (by Patty Warner). And I ask ALL parishioners, too, to help reduce any confusion and anxiety by resisting the temptation to engage in speculations, hearsay, rumors, etc., especially on social media platforms like Facebook. I want to assure everyone that if anyone has ANY questions whatsoever regarding parish life, decisions, development, etc., all anyone needs to do is simply to contact the Pastor directly to clarify things: my contact is hamilton.college@outlook.com, and my better number is 419-634-2626. Let's help each other in a stressful time by communicating only accurate information. Let's pull together, and we will get through this, with the Lord's help and grace! Thanks so much!