

# St. Ambrose Parish

MAY 17, 2020  
BEEHIVE

## Religious Education in a time of COVID

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children” — so says the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Thanks to the coronavirus, that’s getting real.

As Catholic schools closed and religious education classes got canceled, religious education for the young has become yet another part of life that will not proceed normally, at least for a few weeks, if not more.

My guess is that — as with school closings — more than a few children cheered the cancellation of religious ed classes. For families stressed by the economic or health challenges related to the explosion of the coronavirus, it might be a relief to take a vacation from them.

But, if possible, parents should consider stepping in to provide even informal religious education while social distancing or even quarantining. To that end, catechetical experts are offering some free resources, including from Catechist magazine and from St. Mary’s Press.

As someone who has been homeschooling my children in religious ed, because of some special learning issues, for the last year, I can offer some tips from our experience.

Although my parish offered me a copy of the textbook used in the parish classes, our family has tried to connect the content of our weekly “class” to family experiences and the church calendar.

We read about and dis-

cussed saints, including those with connections to our hometown of Chicago (Mother Cabrini) and Vietnam, the country of my son’s birth (the Vietnamese Martyrs). We went over the promises we parents and godparents made for our children, and talked about how they would renew those promises in confirmation. In preparation for a family friend’s bat mitzvah, we read about Judaism.

A few Sundays ago, I decided to connect our weekly religious ed session with the news about the current health pandemic. We turned to Exodus (after a brief review about the Torah, which we had studied when learning about Judaism) to learn about the 10 plagues of Egypt.

My kids are already familiar with the Exodus story (thank you, Disney, for “The Prince of Egypt”!), but we read up on the context of the 10 plagues, with Moses asking Pharaoh to “let my people go” on behalf of the enslaved Hebrews. When Pharaoh refused, God sent down the plagues to punish the Egyptians.

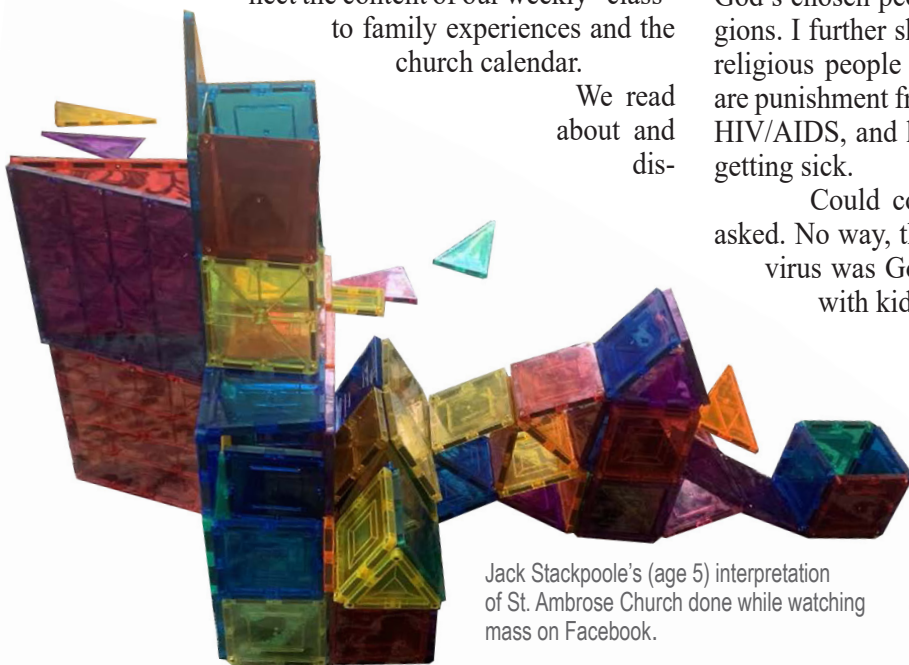
Immediately, my 11 and 12 year-olds were confused: How could God do that? Aren’t the Egyptians God’s people too, since God created them?

This required some explaining about the concept of God’s chosen people in Judaism and among some other religions. I further shared how, in the past and even today, some religious people believe plagues and other natural disasters are punishment from God for sinful behavior. We talked about HIV/AIDS, and how some people blamed LGBT people for getting sick.

Could coronavirus be a punishment from God?” I asked. No way, they said. In fact, my son argued that even a virus was God’s creation. Let me tell you, conversation with kids is rarely boring!

I’m thinking of spending time contrasting our experience of the Mass via livestream versus the in-person experience. I am hoping they might actually miss parts of it and may be able to explore their own beliefs about Eucharist, the people of God and privatized-versus-shared reli-

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Jack Stackpoole's (age 5) interpretation of St. Ambrose Church done while watching mass on Facebook.

# Liturgical Directives for the Archdiocese of Detroit

*This is an abridged version of the lengthy directives from Archbishop Vigneron which were issued on May 12, 2020. The full text can be read at [aod.org](http://aod.org)*

1. At the discretion of the pastor, a parish in the Archdiocese of Detroit is permitted to resume public Masses on Tuesday, May 19, 2020 under the conditions below.

2. Pride of place for attending these earliest Masses should be given to the Elect, Candidates for Full Communion, and those assisting these two groups for entrance into the Catholic Church. Directives for completion of RCIA and sacramental initiation of these groups will be forthcoming from the Office of Christian Worship.

3. **All parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit will resume public Mass by Friday, May 29, 2020** under the necessary conditions listed below —

a. **Face-coverings/masks are to be worn by the faithful in and around the church.**

b. **Cleaning and sanitizing of church facilities using proper techniques before or after Masses.**

c. **Physical distancing is to be practiced in the church and on the church property.**

d. **Parish churches are not to exceed 25% of total capacity for the church.**

i. This limit should allow people to remain at least six feet apart.

ii. Depending on church layout, this number may have to be less than 25% of the total capacity.

iii. An additional location on the church property (e.g. social hall, parking lot) may be used as an “overflow” for additional people desiring to attend public Mass.

– This should not exceed the same 25% capacity for the space.

– Both indoor and outdoor Masses require adherence to strict physical distancing guidelines.

**Funerals, Weddings, and Baptisms no longer require individual permission and may resume along the same timeline and under the same conditions.**

**All non-liturgical gatherings should continue to be suspended.** At the pastor’s discretion, exceptions may be made if attendees observe strict health and safety guidelines and the gathering does not exceed 10 persons at any one time.

**All the faithful in the Archdiocese of Detroit are dispensed from their Sunday obligation to attend Mass through Sunday, September 6, 2020.**

Those older than 65 years old (the recommended CDC age), with a compromised health condition or caring for the sick in any way, are encouraged to stay home. **Anyone who is ill, has a temperature, cough, etc., should definitely stay home as an act of justice to the whole community.**

Clergy with a respiratory infection of any kind should avoid celebrating public Masses or administering the sacraments as they are able to do so during this phase. The same applies to other ministers, e.g., deacons, lectors, ushers, etc.

1. **Physical distancing is to be observed and signified by signs, tape, or other means.** This includes both indoor and outdoor areas

**Masses offered indoors will be limited in attendance, depending on the guidelines set by public authorities.** The faithful are asked to contact their parish for details about how to attend an upcoming Mass.

Seating for the assembly: Mindful of the imposed allowed limitations and the physical layout of the church, **parishes should clearly designate where seating is permitted** (such as seating people in alternating pews with a 2-pew separation or seating in different sections for different Masses).

Those living in the same household may sit together without distancing

a. For the distribution of Holy Communion, new patterns of approaching the altar might need to be configured to better allow for proper distancing.

b. To the extent possible, **those in line for Holy Communion should maintain a 6’ distance between each other and those in the pews.**

c. To the extent possible, the priest and ministers should remain 6’ apart from each other.

Posted instructions reminding people to wear masks and to keep physical distance would be helpful, as well as signs to assist in the reception of Holy Communion. Parishes can mark the floor where people will line up to indicate proper spacing between persons.

**Cloth face coverings (masks) are to be worn by everyone approaching church and inside church** (except for those under 2 years old).

The priest celebrant and other ministers need not wear masks or gloves during the liturgy given they are more than 6’ from the assembly during Mass.

**Collection Baskets should not be passed from person to person.** Other collection points (e.g. boxes) suitable for the faithful to drop in their offerings should be provided.

Parishes should have the maximum fresh air as possible circulating within the building.

Holy Water and Baptismal fonts remain empty.

Music is certainly important to our liturgical celebrations as it attempts to lift the soul and express our faith. Each parish needs to consider the following as we begin to return to Mass in limited numbers while observing the required physical distancing.

Because the faithful will be wearing masks, singing on the part of the assembly might prove challenging and ineffective.

*Concluded on page 4.*



# All Things Considered

I write this just moments after receiving and reading **Archbishop Vigneron's** directives allowing us to resume public liturgies. It is a great blessing to once again allow the faithful back to the Lord's table after weeks of forced Eucharistic abstinence. As important as the celebration of Mass is to our identity as a Christian, the safety and preservation of life is of primary importance – hence the wisdom of the ban. This experience gives us just a glimpse of what so many of our Catholic brothers and sisters go through for protracted months on end – particularly in countries hostile to the Church and in places where there are few priests.

A return to some semblance of communal sacramental life is welcome. I am, nevertheless saddened as to what many of these restrictions will do to our experience of the Mass. We have spent the last fifty years re-awakening our sense of possessing the Mass as a corporate activity. That started with the restoration of the vernacular. It continued with congregational singing, restoring appropriate ministries to the laity, and most importantly – the restoration of both of the sacred species – body and blood of Christ – as a right of the baptized faithful.

As I read through these guidelines, I see a number of these hard-fought items being shelved. There has always been a group in the Church who disliked many of these liturgical restorations and who pined for a more isolated, personal experience of the Mass. As a priest who has spent a lifetime educating about and enacting the principles of Vatican II, I can only hope that this extraordinary way that we must now use to offer mass will not become a new normal. The Mass is not just a way of distributing Holy Communion, it's a collective prayer experience of many interlocking parts.

Do not misunderstand me. I think that our Archbishop has appropriately consulted and is right to ask us to follow procedures which will protect ourselves and others from harm. Now is not the time for a priest to be a "cowboy" and ride the range solo. It's my job now to be a "shepherd" and care for the flock that is in danger. You have my promise that here at St. Ambrose we will do what is asked of us while maintaining the dignity and commonality of the Mass and the other Sacraments – as best as we are able.

It's going to take my staff, our ministers, parishioners and me a little time to figure out the safest and least burdensome way of "keeping social distance" while simultaneously bonding ourselves together as the Mystical Body of Christ. Since the obligation to attend mass is lifted through the Summer, the first thing we need to determine is just how many of our parishioners will feel it safe to come back to public worship. We will start by opening up the taping of next Saturday's 4:00 mass to a congregation of 25% capacity, and observing the Archbishop's personal protection directives. We will require masks, and we will ask that your temperature be taken with an electronic scanner upon entry.



On Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup>, we will broadcast mass, and offer Mass in the Church at 10:00 a.m. Be prepared to observe the protocols of a mask, temp check and social distancing. We will then determine if one Saturday and one Sunday mass are sufficient through the Summer. Since a number of parishioners will continue to self-quarantine, we will provide an on-line Mass as long as there are enough viewers to warrant it. We are now serving 1,000 viewers on average each week. A good portion of that congregation may still need us.

Churches (and choirs in particular) are proven "hot spots" for transmission of Covid 19. Should there be a flare up we would of course tighten things up again.

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With the help of **Mike Moceri** and his son **Michael**, we were able to momentarily catch up with the number of ribbons honoring our Michigan brethren who have succumbed to the pandemic. As of last Sunday, 4,300 of blue ribbons were on our

trees. As of this writing, 4,584 souls have been lost in our State.

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Even though we are seeing a loosening of some of the quarantine measures by the Church and the State, I don't think it's the correct time to discontinue the Saturday Hot Supper program that we offer to the homeless at St. John Congregational Shelter on Kercheval and the meals that we provide for our first responders in the Grosse Pointe Park Public Safety building across the street from us. Both the needy and the deserving have expressed deep appreciation. Given the resource we have in the ARK, it's the right thing for us to do.

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We, like everyone else in the world, are trying to secure face masks. We have a bolt of Ambrosian Maroon cotton that we would like to convert into masks. If you can do a little sewing for the cause, email us for the details.

TRP



## Spend a Few Moments of Prayer In Front of the Blessed Sacrament

The church will be open from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. every Sunday during the pandemic for private prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

In compliance with Governor Whitmer's directives, there can be no more than 10 people in the building at a time. While inside, maintain at least six feet between you and other people. We ask that you please sanitize the pew area where you sat after you have finished your prayer. Supplies for this will be provided.

## Liturgical Directives, cont.

a. Health experts indicate that singing produces 6-10x more droplets from our mouths than recitation. Keeping singing for the assembly to a minimum is advised and the congregation should not remove their masks to sing.

b. If there is a "choir" present, it should be as small as possible with each member spaced about 10' apart.

c. If worship aids are produced, they are to be used for only one Mass and then disposed of to avoid any possible contamination.

**CLEANING AND DISINFECTING:** To help stop the spread of the virus, effective cleaning and disinfecting is essential.

a. Hand sanitizer is to be available in the sanctuary as needed during a liturgy. If possible, hand sanitizer should also be placed near the entrances of the church for the faithful. The faithful are invited to bring their own supply of hand sanitizer to use before Holy Communion.

b. It is advisable to remove as much as possible from the pews, e.g., hymnals, missalettes, envelopes, to make it easier to clean and disinfect.

d. After each liturgy, items used by the public should (e.g. door handles, rest rooms, etc.) be disinfected.

e. If parishes do not have available maintenance staff for this level of cleaning, they could ask some healthy parishioners to help with this task after Mass.

To avoid large numbers leaving at the same time, consider dismissing the people one pew or one section at a time.

### DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

1. At the start of Mass, and again at the time of Communion, the priest should explain how Holy Communion will be distributed.

2. Distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful is suspended at this time, nor should the lay faithful receive by intinction.

3. In Masses with a small number of people, Communion should be distributed by the priest(s) and deacon. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion need to be trained regarding these special procedures.

**Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if someone is wearing a glove.** Instead, proper and diligent hand hygiene should be observed before and after distributing and/or receiving Holy Communion.

**The faithful should remove any masks and gloves as they approach the minister. If possible, the reverence and the verbal exchange could take place 6' away.** Bow – "The Body of Christ" – "Amen" – then step forward to receive.

The minister should take special care not to touch the faithful in any way (hand, tongue, etc.). If he does, he should pause, place the ciborium on the nearby table, sanitize his hands, and then proceed. It is not necessary to sanitize hands between each communicant unless physical contact is made.

Special provisions (such as those in need of low-gluten hosts, those unable to receive even low-gluten hosts, and Holy Communion to the homebound) should receive particular consideration from pastors.

If the celebrant of the Mass is in a higher-risk group, a different priest, deacon, or EMHC may distribute Holy Communion.



## The Buzz

This is the sixth Sunday of Easter and we begin to ramp up our full celebration of the Easter season leading to a month of very special Liturgical observances. The shift is from centering on the truth of Christ's Resurrection, to a focus on the Gift of the Holy Spirit who empowers us to live out the good news of Easter. Read again the scriptures from today's mass and pay attention to the references about the Holy Spirit – especially the promises in the Gospel passage.

Translate the readings into the language of your home. For example, from the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: is anyone showing signs (not of illness but) of Christ's living presence in your home? Are you? Is there joy in your home?

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: have you been uniting (the meaning of "sanctify") with Christ as Lord in your hearts? Are you filled with hope so that you could give a reason to anyone who might ask about it? A parishioner wrote me after hearing a prayer and address by Pope Francis. His Holiness cited a passage from Mark's Gospel (4:35) when in a boat the disciples were "caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm." Well, you know how the rest of the story goes. But the writer shared the reflection that came afterwards: "We are in the ship with Jesus, and He will calm the storm." Now whenever their mind starts to head down a dark, scary path, they repeat the reflection/phrase; the negative thoughts are blocked, and they return to a place of "hopeful" thinking. I was very blessed to receive this true "Epistle" from a Domestic Church in the Parish of St. Ambrose!

From today's Gospel: there is so much here, it'll take your family a week just to get started plumbing the depths of the connections with your lives. To start: do you perceive/believe the Holy Spirit is ALWAYS with you? Is this the Spirit the world rejects, but whom you know? Is knowing the true Holy Spirit easy or difficult for you and yours? Do you "see" the Lord living in you? In each other? Are you able to sense the living presence of the Holy Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – living within you . . . loving you?

Wow. If you feel bored or restless as the quarantine continues, above are some reflection/prayer points to occupy a little of your time, and perhaps to spend some time to share with those in your Domestic Church. If you are willing to share any of these reflections with others, email me: [chuck.stambrose@comcast.net](mailto:chuck.stambrose@comcast.net).



Ever since the celebration of Ascension was transferred from a Thursday to a Sunday, I have regularly encouraged the reading of the scripture passages assigned to that superseded 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter as a great source for meditation. I used to call that day – Upper Room Sunday, as that was the setting for the disciples in between the Ascension and Pentecost.

This year, circumstances beg me to call it Quarantine Sunday! Once again, we believe, we fear, we are eager to break out! Let's allow the powerful breath of the Holy Spirit to guide our decisions and actions – for the protection, the health, and the loving advancement of everyone He brings to us in the days to come.



Deep into May and Springtime, I'm fasting not only from Holy Communion but also from baseball. I'm enjoying a renewed discovery of the deep reality of the Lord's Presence in the Domestic Church. But for those of you who are baseball fans of my vintage or appreciators of its mid-last-century history, I have a cute little piece passed on by our old parish friend, Dave Wagner: Yogi Berra was well known for his ability to hit pitches outside the strike zone. One at-bat, Yogi took a pitch that the umpire called a strike. Yogi argued with him that it was a bad pitch. The ump shot back, "It couldn't have been a bad pitch. You didn't swing at it!"

There's some kind of lesson in this for all of us in the Domestic Church – even if it's just to keep on swinging and do it with a smile full of faith and hope.

Chuck Dropiewski

## The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the  
St. Ambrose Catholic Community  
Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

**Pastor:** Rev. Timothy R. Pelc

**Pastoral Minister:** Charles Dropiewski

**Religious Education:** Kelly Anne Woolums

**Minister of Music:** Louise Veltri

Dr. Norah Duncan IV – on hiatus

**Office Manager:** Peggy O'Connor

**Secretary:** Mary Urbanski

### Sacramental Celebrations

**Masses:** On the Lord's Day –

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 and 11:15 a.m.

**Baptism:** Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

**Penance:** As announced and by appointment.

**Marriage:** Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

**Funeral:** Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased's passing.

### Directory

**Parish Office:** 15020 Hampton

Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230

**Tel:** (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838

**Email address:** [stambrose@comcast.net](mailto:stambrose@comcast.net)

**Religious Education:** (313) 332-5633

**Pastoral Ministry:** (313) 332-5631

**Ark Scheduling:** (313) 822-2814

**Parish Website:** [stambrosechurch.net](http://stambrosechurch.net)

## E-Donations

St. Ambrose Parish is equipped to make electronic transfers from your checking account or credit card on our website. Christian Financial Credit Union brings parishioners and friends the ability to make an electronic contribution to St. Ambrose on a regular or one-time basis.

Your checking account or credit card may be used to make a single donation; or you may set up automatic weekly, monthly or quarterly contributions on a schedule. This solution is not meant to replace the current envelope method of collection, but instead to provide an additional alternative for those who might prefer to make their contributions electronically.

We hope this additional financial service allows you another way to manage your stewardship to St. Ambrose. Visit [stambrosechurch.net](http://stambrosechurch.net) for more information on electronic giving.

## Liturgy Schedule for the Coming Week

**May 18**

*St. John I, pope & martyr*

**May 19**

*Easter Weekday*

**May 20**

*St. Bernardine of Siena, priest*

**May 21**

*St. Christopher Magallanes, priest & Companions, martyrs*

**May 22**

*St. Rita of Cascia, religious*

**May 23**

*4:00 p.m. Vigil of the Ascension*

**May 24**

*10:00 a.m. The Ascension of the Lord*

•Web Mass broadcast of our Sunday Mass from St. Ambrose will begin at 8:00 a.m. and will be accessible throughout the day.

## Spending Spotlight

In the last two months of the Coronavirus, our church building is getting less use, unfortunately. So we've dialed down the thermostat, hoping to save a bit of money and be kind to the Earth. Our April 2020 bill from DTE Energy was \$4,986.31. The bill for the similar period in 2019 was \$5,013.39. We're puzzled as to why these costs were about equal?

## Scriptures for the Sixth Week of Easter

**May 18**

Acts 16: 11-15  
Ps 149: 1b-6a, 9b  
Jn 15: 26-16: 4a

**May 19**

Acts 16: 22-34  
Ps 138: 1-3, 7c-8  
Jn 16: 5-11

**May 20**

Acts 11: 15, 22-18: 1  
Ps 148: 1-2, 11-14  
Jn 16: 12-15

**May 21**

Acts 18: 1-8  
Ps 98: 1-4  
Jn 16: 16-20

**May 22**

Acts 18: 9-18  
Ps 47: 2-7  
Jn 16: 20-23

**May 23**

Acts 18: 23-28  
Ps 47: 2-3, 8-10  
Jn 16: 23b-28

**May 24**

Acts 1: 1-11  
Ps 47: 2-3, 6-9  
Eph 1: 17-23  
Mt 28: 16-20

## The Ascension of the Lord

The ban on public masses is slowly being lifted. At 4:00 on Saturday, May 23, we will tape the liturgy for broadcast the next day. We will open that mass to a congregation of 25% of the building's capacity - roughly 150 persons. Face masks and social distancing will be required. Mass on the Feast of the Ascension will be offered at 10:00 in the morning, on May 24. Again, we can only allow 25% of the building's seating capacity - 150 persons - and face masks and social distancing will be required. View Sunday mass at [facebook.com/stambroseparish](https://facebook.com/stambroseparish) or [stambroselive on youtube. stambrosechurch.net](https://stambroselive.on.youtube.stambrosechurch.net) starting at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday.

## Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

**On Sunday, May 10, 2020**

in envelopes we received ..... \$5,202.00

in the loose collection ..... 0

in electronic donations ..... \$3,711.00

for a total of..... \$8,913.00

**Under** budget for the week ..... \$1,187.00

Number of envelopes mailed ..... 782

Number of envelopes used ..... 40



Join us on Facebook  
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## Our Sick

Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Karen Culver, Ann Sullivan Kay, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, George Bucec, Emilie Kasper, Darby O'Toole, Anna Noto Billings, Vilma Rivers, Vilma Marone, Eileen O'Brien, Martha Luna, Dina Engels, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Betty Greenia, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Frank Gregory, Alex Billiu, Gladys Bogos, Wayne Wallrich, Jerry Hansen, Jackie Walkowski, Kristen Kingzett, Denise DiBiancha, Valerie Dryden, Angela Stack, Maria Simcina, Tony Macksoud, Albina Checki, the Capuchin friars under quarantine and those suffering and hospitalized worldwide with COVID-19.

## The Cry of the Poor

Bad times are even worse for the poor and jobless. You need to know that our St. Vincent dePaul Society here at St. Ambrose continues to serve the needy in this part of town.

Even though they do not make home visits during this period of pandemic, they continue to provide our neighbors in need with energy and rent assistance as well as vouchers for food and cleaning supplies. When the Covid-19 threat subsides, they expect to see a huge surge in requests for financial assistance.

If you've been using your quarantine time to do some cleaning and divesting, please know that the St. Vincent de Paul stores are closed and are unable to take donated goods at this time.

For now, our SVdP welcomes financial donations. Masks and supplies for sanitation can also be used. Please send checks made out to St. Ambrose St. Vincent de Paul Conference and mail them to the Parish Office. Drop any other supplies at the rectory front door, in a marked box or bag.

## 52 Sundays

52 Sundays offers simple and insightful ways for your family to spend time together each Sunday learning more about the Catholic faith and having fun while you're at it. Materials are available for download online or you may sign up to receive the weekly email at [www.52sundays.com/](https://www.52sundays.com/)

# How Ambrosians are Coping

By Tim Kiska

If there was ever a time when people need faith, this is the time. The old saying “there are no atheists in foxholes,” which originated during World War I, comes to mind: the COVID-19 virus has claimed 4,584 lives in Michigan, with nearly 48,000 reported cases in the state as of early last week. Unemployment is at a level not seen since the Great Depression.

The uncertainty accompanying the pandemic is even more vexing. When will it end? Will the virus go away, and then return? Could this go on for two years? Are we looking into the abyss of massive economic destruction. Nobody knows.

The Roman Catholic Church is an ancient institution. But St. Ambrose parishioners are embracing their faith and coping with the pandemic using any number of modern media to embrace their faith. We’re talking television, iPads, earbuds, the web and old-fashioned printed Bibles.

For Karlos Haynes, it is the television. And the church bulletin, which has stayed constant for decades.

She was originally a member of St. Martin of Tours Church, which was absorbed by St. Ambrose in 1989, and attended St. Ambrose Grade School. Anybody who attends 8:30 a.m. Mass might recognize her: She’s the lector who often carries up the Lectionary. It is encased in a brass cover, and each has a three-year cycle – named A, B, C. (We’re in Year A, which is primarily the gospel of St. Matthew.)

Mostly, she has been tending to her 81-year old mother, Mary James Haynes, doing shopping for her.

“I watch the Mass on television,” she says. “I keep up with the bulletin, so that puts me in touch.”

For Rachel Hartung, it’s the iPad and the earbuds.

She and her husband, Matt, can often be spotted at 8:30 a.m. Mass, as well. She has her hands full, home-schooling three children, ages 9, 7 and 4.

“We’ve been live-streaming the Mass,” she says. “It’s a feeling of comfort to see the inside of the church and hear the homilies. It’s something familiar in such an unfamiliar time. The homilies have been particularly fitting. With people’s worries and what’s on everybody’s minds, the homilies speak to those worries and incorporate the scripture into how to deal with that.”

As for the earbuds, she listens to the sermons during her two-and-a-half mile walks.

For Roger Playwin, a member of the St. Ambrose Parish Council, it’s a variety.

He is a fan of a daily email issued by the Center for Action and Contemplation. That email is written by Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and describes CAC’s mission as “building a rhythm of contemplative prayer and Zen meditation into our days, and even more fundamentally, believing that external behavior should be connected to and supported by inner guidance.”

Rohr’s work arrives in the form of a daily email, one subject a week, with a recapitulation on Saturday. You can find it at [www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org). It’s something Playwin uses to start the day.

And Playwin does something more traditional: He has been reading the New Testament, one chapter a day. And even more traditional: His wife, Susan, recites two rosaries a day.

The message may be: soldiers coping with the horrors of the trenches in World War I may not have had iPads or earbuds to comfort them. But the sentiment remains the same, 100 years later, as we adjust in our own modern-day foxholes.

## Religious Education in time of Covid

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gious experience.

When you make religious education an integral part of your family’s life, the connections start showing up everywhere. Once, while watching one of our favorite television series, “Brain Games,” we discovered an episode about the seven deadly sins. This prompted a chance to learn more about and memorize the sins and their corresponding virtues.

You might think that children of a religion journalist would have higher-than-average biblical and religious literacy, but it takes constant work, even for adults. One week, I helped my daughter memorize the names of the four Gospels; another week we all learned about Ramadan, which several of our kids’ classmates celebrate.

For the digital generation, the use of video is a no-brainer to keep their interest. YouTube has some helpful videos on St. Patrick, (including a favorite from VeggieTales), and PBS members will be able to watch the new Dorothy Day documentary on demand. You also could have kids make their own videos about age-appropriate religious topics. I’m also a big fan of craft projects that help kids to actively learn content.

Finally, our homeschool religious education has always involved service to others. The coronavirus pandemic will mean plenty of people in need. Already, we’ve delivered food to a needy single mom in our neighborhood. Whenever religious education classes might start up again, most parents will be happy to hand off the education of our kids to the professionals. But a few weeks of homeschooling religious education might help parents to be more involved in the future, and to take that “first responsibility” more seriously.

*By Heidi Schlumpf, for the National Catholic Reporter. A version of this story appeared in the NCR April 3-16, 2020 print issue.*