



Temporary Suspension of All Masses... What to Do?

As most or all of you now know, Bishop Deeley, along with most of the bishops in our country, has decided to comply with the CDC's recommendation to limit all public gatherings, whether secular or religious, to ten people or less. Considering that the the usual number of people attending Mass is more than ten, he has decided to suspend all public Masses in the Diocese of Portland in order to help control the spread of the novel corona virus. Unfortunately, this means that until further notice, there will be no public Masses in the whole state of Maine, which is the geographical boundary of the Portland diocese. While this is a tragedy for the Church, it is our current situation, and we have to find a way to make the best of it.

First, please know that I am grieved that we are not able to have Mass as a parish family as we are used to. However, rest assured that I will be celebrating Mass every day for your intentions, as well as for the individual intention that may be already assigned to a particular Mass. So if you have requested Masses to be said for loved ones, friends, or special intentions, those Masses will be celebrated daily, albeit in private.

Second, another unfortunate element of this crisis is that it is happening during the holiest time of our liturgical year, Lent and Easter. While I am not sure exactly how long this suspension will last, I am confident it will be through the remainder of the month of March (5th Sunday of Lent) and possibly through Easter Sunday (April 12th). This will mean that we are not able to meet for the Stations and Adoration on Fridays, but you can pray those on your own at home in order to bolster your prayer life during Lent. I will look for a good Stations of the Cross website to link to our parish website. I'll try to make it as easy as possible for you.

Third, the parish has a subscription to the FORMED.org website. If you don't yet have an account, please go to www.stpeterthefisherman.formed.org and follow the on-screen directions to establish your account. This website has wonderful resources for catechesis and entertainment, all centered around our Catholic faith. While we are not able to meet publicly for Mass, we can still learn about our faith, and the FORMED.org website can be a great help. The account is free! If you have problems signing up, please call me at the rectory, and I will assist you in getting set up.

Fourth, because we are not able to have Mass together, I will do my best to send out via email such as this one a weekly/Sunday reflection on the readings and our progress through the remainder of Lent and into the Easter season. I will continue this for as long as the suspension of Masses remains in effect. What would be helpful is to read the Sunday readings beforehand in order to get the most out of the reflection. You can access the Sunday readings by going to www.usccb.org and clicking on the correct day on the calendar you'll find on that page. Clicking on the date will bring up the readings for the day. This site can be used for Mass readings for both weekdays and Sundays.

Fifth, and finally, some have asked me what they can do to continue supporting the church financially during this uncertain time. As a pastor, you can imagine this is a real and practical concern of mine, as the bills will still need to be paid. If you would like to continue supporting the parish financially, there are a couple of options. One option is to simply mail your offertory donation to the parish mailing address: P.O. Box 248, Machias, ME 04654. If you use offertory envelopes, you can simply insert those into a regular mailing envelope and drop it in the mail. If you do not use offertory envelopes, you can send a check to the same address with your name, address, and telephone number on a note enclosed within the envelope so we can give you proper credit for

your donations. A second option is to go to our website homepage www.stpeterthefisherman.me and scroll down and click on the link "Online Giving by WeShare." This link will take you to a secure site where you can set up an account and use your credit card for your offertory gift online. Whichever method you choose, I am very grateful for your generosity and continued support.

My dear parishioners, the role of pastor is to shepherd the flock, and I am delighted to be your pastor. My job is to walk with you down the path that leads to Christ, whether that be during times of elation or times of trial and tribulation. During this time of trial and tribulation, please know that I am here for you. You can always reach me by phone (207-255-3731) or by email (philip.clement@portlanddiocese.org). Please also be assured of my daily prayers for you and your family, and know that I have already prayed a special Mass and a special prayer of protection over our parish and over all who live within our parish boundaries. May St. Michael protect us from the evil of this virus, as well as from any other illness or disease, and may he pray to ease the suffering of those who have been, or will be, afflicted with the corona virus, as well as other ailments. As St. Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio) used to say, "Pray, hope, and don't worry." All will be well!

With prayers for your protection and holiness,
Fr. Philip Clement