



The Pastor's Heart – Friday of the Second Week of Easter

4-24-20

Brothers and Sisters

Grace and Peace to you in the Risen Lord Jesus. Grace and Peace is how St. Paul begins many of his letters in the New Testament. It always seems a good thing to say. Grace and Peace to you.

Every day the Scripture passages in the Divine Office and for mass continue to speak to me. Today was a good example. Jesus told his disciples there were ten thousand hungry people waiting for something to eat and he asked them what they were going to do about it. The needs were beyond them. So Jesus said to them “what do you have available?” They had only a little bit, five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus blessed that. Everyone ate their fill and there were leftovers. We cannot be intimidated by the gigantic needs that face us. We can keep our eyes on Jesus. We can offer him whatever we have. His blessing will bring a great multiplication of our offering.

Here is some parish news. Live streaming continues to be a source of encouragement for many. Every day I get messages from parishioners and visitors expressing their appreciation and how much they benefit from being a part of what we are doing. I think this is a time where we can graciously reach out to members of our family and friends and invite them to join us for these services. It has never been easier to get to mass, especially if it hasn't been for a while.

We had a great crowd for an hour of praise and worship on Tuesday night. It also is available on our YouTube Holy Family Novi channel. Many people said to me ‘let's do this again.’ We plan to do so. We will keep you posted. As we become more familiar with technology we are learning more about what we don't know. I felt bad because on Tuesday evening we had about fifty people waiting for praise and worship to start for over fifteen minutes. They clicked on a Holy Family Tuesday evening Praise and Worship icon. But our connection went down on YouTube after we had started filming. When we reconnected another icon popped up that was working. We now know to take down the icons for false starts (YouTube is jammed and this occasionally happens). Be patient. We are learning.

Another thing we are working on is that we want to identify parish members who have serious financial struggles. Please tell me if you have serious needs, or if you know people with serious needs. When I first heard about everyone getting stimulus checks I said to myself I don't need it and I really want to give it to a brother or sister who does. I know that I am not alone on this. There is a rich selection of passages in the New Testament that talk about churches providing for ‘the needs of the saints.’ Before asking for contributions we are discovering the critical needs we have and developing a team to respond. We will keep you posted.

Fr. Jim started hearing confessions in the parking lot on Wednesday morning. It went well. Fr. Jim would have his car window rolled down and someone would have their car window rolled down and go to confession. It was outdoors. Socially distanced. We want to provide safe and secure ways for brothers and sisters who experience a serious need, who haven't been to confession in a very long time, to have access to the sacrament. We both continue to be available on Saturday mornings at 9am with the same understanding.

A parishioner wrote to me and said that someone has started a GoFundMe account for Ardiana's restaurant. Robert and Ardiana are parishioners of Holy Family and I know many of us love to eat there. This is a tough time for restaurants. I trust some of you appreciate knowing about this site.

We are developing several different phone trees calling parishioners to see how they are doing, what they need, and how we can pray. If you are lonely, or know of someone who is, let me know. We would love to call.

Of course, the inevitable question is 'When O Lord?' When will things start to be different? If I had a reliable answer to that question I could secure a large endowment fund to run the parish for years. No one knows. We learned today that the Michigan 'Stay home at home' directive has been extended until May 15. When things do change, I believe they will change gradually. We are committed to observing all the civil and archdiocesan requirements. Within those boundaries we will do everything we possibly can to resume what is allowed. Until then I believe we should be focused on learning all the things God wants us to learn. I firmly believe God does not want us to return to the normal of things before. God is after a new normal of faith and discipleship and fruitfulness. We are Catholic Missionary Disciples and this is not 'time off' but a time for 'here I am Lord, send me, use me, change me.' And that is a great place to be. That is where we will always belong. I am privileged to be involved with you on this mission.

That is the news for now. I love you. I pray for you. This is not going to last forever. Until then: stay safe, keep praying.

Fr. Bob