



St. Therese of Lisieux

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Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Dear Parishioners of St. Therese of Lisieux,

I am writing to give you an update on what we have done here at the parish to address our response to the COVID-19 crisis.

First of all, I want to thank you for your continued support of our parish through your prayers, volunteerism, and financial contributions. All of these are most appreciated. Many of you have sent emails and cards, as well as stopped by the parish to offer your support in whatever way you can. I want to thank in particular the St. Vincent de Paul society, the Circle of Friends, the Knights of Columbus, and all those who have worked to provide us with educational and worship opportunities over the past few months.

Second, we have made a commitment to reducing our expenses during this time by turning off the heat, cutting back the garbage collection to once a week, and reducing our use of utilities. We will not be watering the parish grounds (we will let God do that) and we have cancelled the CSA dinner and the Family Fun Fest for this year. Some of our vendors have offered us a reduced rate for their services. However, as a result of the crisis, our collections are down 50-60 percent. Unfortunately, we have had to lay off our employees. They have been asked to apply for unemployment at this time. It is my hope that this situation will be temporary and short-lived. This was a difficult decision and not taken lightly. It is my hope that the current situation will be short-lived and we can bring our employees back to work soon.

Third, during this time we have added podcasts and live streaming of our Sunday Mass. Brenda Manzo has been offering online bible study. Confessions are by appointment. Marilyn Cito has written articles for our bulletin and online to assist us with coping during this time. Those who are in need have been assisted by the St. Vincent de Paul society and the Knights of Columbus.

Fourth, this past Tuesday, the Archbishop announced that the churches may begin the re-opening process on Tuesday, May 19th. To prepare for this, we have added hand sanitizing stations and the seating will be re-configured to allow for proper social distancing. We will be following the directives from civic and religious authorities to ensure that all who visit our facility are safely welcomed. You may read the Archbishop's directives on our website.

Resumption of Public Masses

Our first public Mass will be Tuesday, May 19 at 8:30 AM and we will begin our normally scheduled weekend Masses on Saturday, May 23. As a reminder our weekday Masses are Tuesday thru Friday at 8:30 AM and our weekend Masses are Saturday at 4:30 PM and Sunday at 8:00, 9:45, and 11:45 AM. These Masses, particularly the weekend Masses will look much different in three most visible ways: First, seating will be arranged in a manner as to where the

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faithful are seated six feet apart from each other. The pews are denoted as to which ones can be used and which ones cannot be used. Additionally, those pews which can be used have an "X" to mark where people may sit. The only exception to people sitting together is if all the people are part of the same family. Secondly, the distribution of the Holy Eucharist will take place with parishioners **staying in** their pews and the presider and Eucharistic Ministers will come around to each person to distribute the Holy Eucharist. Lastly, when Mass is over, the ushers will release people from their pews, one pew at a time. For the time being, all Masses (including weekdays) will be held in the main body of the church. While I realize that these measures may seem overly cautious to some, they are for everyone's protection and are in compliance with the Archbishop's explicit direction.

In addition to weekday and weekend Masses, we are now able to offer baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Of course, all of these ceremonies must adhere to the directives mentioned above and on our website. Please contact the parish to schedule a baptism, your wedding, or a loved one's funeral. To those whose loved one died while we were in quarantine, we encourage you to contact the parish to schedule a memorial Mass.

At this time, because I am still recovering from my own illness, I do not feel comfortable anointing the sick. I am hoping that by June, I will be healthier and I will be able to resume this aspect of my ministry. In the meantime, please contact one of the neighboring parishes if you are in need of this sacrament.

Thank you again for all of your prayers and support of our parish during this time. We are continuing to recover together. It is my hope that this experience will make us stronger as a faith community. May God continue to bless all who are first responders, those who care for the sick, those who are ill due to any kind of sickness, and all who are any way affected during this time.

St. Therese, pray for us.

God bless,



Msgr. John