

A week ago we were talking about the ways we could safely offer Mass by cleaning the church between Masses and limiting our contact with one another. This week we worked on making sure we have the technology to live stream Mass to as many homes as possible, knowing that even more extreme measures might be coming.

This week our Bishop suspended the public celebration of the Mass until further notice. I appreciate the significance of this, and for some, it may be the first time in your life you are missing Mass on a Sunday and not receiving the Eucharist. I relate it to a death. Saint John Vianney described Communion as being to the soul “like blowing on a fire that is about to go out, but still has hot embers; we blow, and the fire burns again.” There is nothing I can say that will take away the pain. But I will offer the thoughts of some more wise than I - the Saints.

The Catholic Church has long taught about Spiritual Communion. Through the ages that Saints have spoken about this as well. “When you do not receive Communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a Spiritual Communion, which is a most beneficial practice,” wrote Saint Teresa of Jesus, “by it the love of God will be greatly impressed upon you.” Saint Thomas Aquinas described it “as an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received him.”

To make a spiritual Communion, you can pray the following prayer at the time of Communion if you are watching or listening to Mass. You could also pray it as you come to the end of a Rosary, time of prayer, or reading of Scripture:

***My Jesus. I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things, and desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot receive You at this moment Sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.  
Never let me be separated from You. Amen.***

I will continue to offer Mass daily, fulfilling the Mass intentions that have been scheduled and remembering all of you in my prayers. Funeral Masses will be allowed but only immediate family members will be permitted to attend. The church will remain open from 7 AM to 8 PM seven days per week for personal prayer. All activities associated with the parish will be canceled until further notice. One exception is that I will be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturdays at 10 AM and on Wednesdays at 2 PM. If you are exhibiting any signs of illness, especially flu like symptoms, it is imperative you not be at church for any reason.

Staff will continue to work between the office and their homes. We are asking visitors to the parish office to ring a bell by the entrance for assistance. The office area will be for staff only so that we can provide a clean and safe environment for staff to work.

With the public celebration of Mass suspended we will live stream Mass on Saturday evenings at 5 PM using Facebook. It will also be available to be viewed after its original airing by going to our website [www.stpatrickofhudson.org](http://www.stpatrickofhudson.org) or our Facebook page: Saint Patrick Parish, the Catholic Community of Hudson. We will also live stream Mass at 10 AM on Wednesdays, which will also be able to be viewed after its original airing.

Our youth ministers and children’s ministers will provide additional online activities. I will also be posting things using a variety of media. If you or someone you know do not use the Internet,

let us know and we will mail them a bulletin each week to keep them informed and provide material for spiritual growth.

As I mentioned last week at Mass we are temporarily suspending our Capital Campaign activities. Thanks to your generosity we have now reached 76% of our financial goal to help repair and improve our church and school facilities and to complete several ministry enhancements. We have now reached “third base” and are 90 feet from home plate, our financial goal. Amid these uncertain times people still are showing their confidence in us and making commitments. But we realize there are even more important concerns that need to be dealt with at this time. If you are looking to pledge to our campaign, commitment packets are available from the parish office.

During the time school is not in session, faith formation is not meeting, and the public celebration of Mass is suspended, we continue to face financial obligations - in particular our payroll. I have assured our staff that we will continue to meet our payroll and provide them benefits as promised, including our hourly staff. This is the least we can do for people dedicated and committed to ministry and teaching our faith. Please continue to support your parish as you are able during this time. If you need information regarding electronic giving, speak with our parish administrator.

If you are aware of anyone who is in crisis - spiritually, emotionally, or economically - please reach out to them or make me aware so we can attempt to reach out and help. We are working with the Hudson Community Christian Food Pantry to remain open. They can use our donations, which can be dropped off at the church. We also have our charity fund that we are using to assist households. I will continue to make visits as is appropriate, especially for the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and Last Rites.

While we might not be together in our physical church, we are still one Church and united by our prayers, faith, love for the Eucharist and sacraments, and desire to love one another. Let us remember the prayer of our beloved Saint Patrick:

***May the Strength of God pilot us.  
May the Power of God preserve us.  
May the Wisdom of God instruct us.  
May the Hand of God protect us.  
May the Way of God direct us.  
May the Shield of God defend us.  
May the Host of God guard us.  
Against the snares of the evil ones,  
Against the temptations of the world.  
May Christ be with us!  
May Christ be before us!  
May Christ be in us, Christ be over all!  
May Thy Salvation, Lord, always be ours,  
This day, O Lord, and evermore. Amen***

*Fr. John*