

I have always said that the hardest mile for me to run is the first mile. Once I get going I love to run. But it is getting out the door and running the first mile that is most difficult. Writing weekly letters to you is similar. The first sentence is the hardest, especially now. What does one say that makes any sense? But once I get going, well, I let you decide how it goes.

Effective this past Monday our parish offices are closed. Our staff are monitoring and responding to emails and phone messages. They are working from their homes but are not at church or capable of providing in-person service. Continue to reach out to them with questions, concerns, or just to say “hi”.

Our church will continue to be unlocked from 7 AM to 8 PM every day including weekends. With the governor’s new mandates, all I would change is that we are keeping the church unlocked not to encourage people to come for prayer. Rather the church for many of us is a refuge – I consider it to be like an emergency room at this time. Some need a place to seek shelter spiritually and emotionally. Our church is available for you for this purpose. Again, if you have any flu-like symptoms, do not come to the church.

I continue to be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturday at 10 AM and Wednesday at 2 PM. During these times the front door is kept wide open so you need not touch it. Once inside we have protocols in place to keep space between everyone. I am also available for the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, to attend to the dying, and individual visits via the phone or computer. Each day I offer a private Mass to fulfill the intentions printed in the bulletin and pray for all of you.

The Hudson Community Christian Food Pantry continues to operate. They are accepting donations. Donations can be left inside our main or downstairs doors. Operation Help is desperately in need of diapers! These can also be left at the church. Finally we are collecting cards and letters to be distributed to residents and staff in our local care facilities. These too can be dropped off in the bin inside the main church doors. This time is especially difficult for residents when they cannot have family or friends visit. Most importantly, remember them in prayer. If you know of anyone who needs anything during this time, please let us know. To access the Food Pantry call 715-338-0332.

We continue to Live Stream Mass on Saturday evenings at 5 PM and Wednesday at 10 AM. You can go to our parish Facebook page: Saint Patrick Parish, The Catholic Community of Hudson, to either watch it live or the recorded video. You can also go to our website, www.stpatrickofhudson.org and click the link. You do not need Facebook to watch the recorded version. We continue to work hard improving our technological capabilities.

H and Antoinette are doing an Instagram chat on Fridays at 6 PM for middle and high school kids. Go to Instagram and join them each Friday evening for prayer and

conversation. They also delivered 275 care packages to middle and high schoolers. They had a great time driving around to our parishioners.

Monday through Friday nights I have Prayer, Story, and Cookies with Father John. To view, go to our school's Facebook page: Saint Patrick Parish School, The Catholic Community of Hudson. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday it is geared to older elementary or middle school aged kids, and Tuesday and Thursday to our younger kids. Send a greeting to us during the show, and just maybe I will give you a shout out at the end.

Finally, I would not be fulfilling my responsibilities if I didn't first thank all of you who continue to support our parish. We are continuing to pay and provide benefits to our entire parish and school staff during this time. We also continue to serve you. While many are experiencing financial hardship at this time, please continue to support Saint Patrick Parish to the best of your ability. Together we can look forward to brighter days. And thank you to everyone who has reached out to me with your concern, words of encouragement, and thanks. I know I am in your prayers, as you are in mine.

Father John