



Dear Parishioners,

Now that we have all been placed under a "stay-at-home" order, we are really beginning to see the serious consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of confirmed cases is rising, and more deaths are reported daily. We encourage and expect everyone to comply with this stay-at-home order to protect yourself and others from contagion. In addition to all public masses being cancelled through Easter, St. Andrew Church remains closed and locked at all times to discourage anyone from leaving home. There are no in-person meetings or events taking place. This includes Confessions, Communion visits to the sick and homebound, meetings of parish organizations, groups and more. Virtually everything is cancelled. **All parish employees have been sent home and will only come to the parish if absolutely necessary to perform essential tasks.** This only leaves the priests – and Mabel – here at the parish. It saddens me greatly that I am unable to be with the parishioners of St. Andrew to celebrate Mass and the other sacraments and to share with you the journey of Lent and Easter as we follow Jesus through death to Life.

It may seem that the holy season of Lent and Easter has been lost to us and taken away from us because we cannot gather in church for Mass and the solemn ceremonies of Holy Week. But I say we should reclaim it. Take it back! We can do that by living, praying and celebrating our faith within the "domestic Church" gathered in the home. We need to unite in prayer, and even if we live alone, to unite in spirit with the members of the Church. It is so important to do so. We are making sacrifices out of necessity. Let us offer them and join them to Christ's sacrifice in a spirit of penance. Let us pray the Stations of the Cross as we ourselves carry the cross of our situation. Let us join our hearts and spirits to the celebration of the Mass daily, and especially on Sundays, by watching a broadcast Mass, by reading and reflecting on the readings and prayers of the Mass, by making a "Spiritual Communion," and by joining in a gathering of the members of the household and sharing thoughts, reflections and prayers. When you do this, you will "reclaim" the Lord's Day and this holy season that you otherwise may have lost. You will also be refreshed, your hope will be renewed and your spirit lifted. Your mental health will improve, and your anxiety and worry will lessen.

The Vatican has issued some guidance for us as we prepare to celebrate Holy Week and Easter while not being permitted to gather as a congregation. I will let you know more about this as Holy Week draws nearer. Confession is not generally available to the faithful (although in an emergency it can be arranged by appointment) so the Vatican is reminding those who have sins on their conscience that the forgiveness of sins can be obtained by being truly sorry for their sins with "perfect contrition," i.e., out of love for God and sorrow for having offended Him and not just because of the fear of punishment, and by having the intention to confess any mortal sins at the earliest opportunity to do so. Please use this means to experience the Lord's forgiveness!

I have seen a few parishioners on my trips to the grocery store and all have asked how we are doing. I am touched by your concern and assure you we are healthy and taking care of ourselves. **What I really want to know – how are YOU doing?** Are you healthy? Are any of you sick from the coronavirus or anything else? Has there been a change in your condition since I last saw you? Are you suffering from the economic consequences of the current epidemic? Have you been laid off, lost your job, forced to close your business or lost your income? If I know, I can pray for you and hopefully offer some encouragement and support. If there is anything I can do under the current restrictions, or even if you just want to tell me about your situation, please contact me at 614- 451-4290 x101, or at smoloney@columbuscatholic.org.

Please remember St. Andrew is also experiencing a drastic loss of income due to no Sunday Masses or offertory collections. IF YOU CAN, please continue your financial support of your parish through electronic contribution or by mailing your contribution to the parish. I do not expect or want you to give what you cannot afford at this time if you are experiencing hardship.

Finally, be encouraged and hopeful, as is befitting people of faith that we are. **We will get through this together.** "Keep calm and carry on."

Your pastor,
Msgr. Stephan Moloney