

March 29, 2020

My dear brothers and sisters,

“Be Not Afraid!” This powerful phrase of confident reassurance was one of Pope St. John Paul II’s favorite encouragements to Christians, and it is repeated over and over again throughout the Bible (it can be found in one form or another several hundred times!). Why? Because God, as a loving Father, wants us to know that He will be with us through everything, especially during those events and times in our lives when we are particularly frightened or uncertain.

It would be an understatement to say that we are living in unprecedented times for the modern world. The Coronavirus is a serious medical situation, and the fear and panic that have seemed to follow are a cause of anxiety and unrest for many. As we move through these uncharted waters, I want you to know that **I am praying for you**, for your family and for the Church. To further help us to confidently hold on to Christ Jesus and our Catholic faith during this challenging time, I want to share with you some resources the parish staff have put together for you:

How can we keep up to date with changes and stay connected to the parish? We are continuing to publish weekend bulletins which you can see online or pick up a hard copy at the church. During the time that we are restricted from meeting for Mass, the bulletin will contain spiritual resources for you as well as any parish updates. We are also regularly updating our website with various content, including a brief daily podcast series which I have created in order to share ideas about living our Catholic faith in these uncertain times, as well as an audio recording of my Sunday homily for each Sunday that we are not able to gather together for Mass. Our parish’s Facebook page likewise has helpful information and updates.

How do we give you our collection envelopes? This is a question we are being asked and *we are so grateful* for you remembering the Church’s operating needs! There are a couple options: you can drop off your envelopes in the parish office or place them in the locked drop box across from the office, or you can mail the envelopes to 57 Horn Blvd, Silver Bay MN 55614. We are looking into electronic giving. If this is something you would be interested in, please contact Cindy.

For the safety of people and to help curb the spread of the virus, you know that masses have been suspended for the time being. However, this temporary suspension of the public celebration of the Mass does not excuse us from still “Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy.” Even though we can’t gather at Church for Sunday Mass right now, Sunday should still remain a day of special focus on prayer, relaxation, and honoring God in what we do. In addition to attending Mass online or on TV, you can pray the prayers we usually say together at Mass from home. These prayers have been posted on our website for you. I would also encourage that families consider praying the Holy Rosary together at least on Sundays, and, if possible, even daily. You can also easily find the Sunday Mass scripture readings online and read them on Sundays. There are many, many ways that God has provided through His Church for us to stay connected to God and to grow in our faith during this time.

Most of all, dear brothers and sisters, again, know of my prayers for you during this time. As always, please feel free to give me a call or send me an email if you wish. I am here to help in whatever way that I am able.

May God bless you! ~ Fr. Steve