

Dearest Parishioners,

Here is our weekly email update for mid-August. I hope that you are all doing well and staying healthy. A few things of note.

First, the plan for faith formation for the fall semester has been decided upon. I have decided that we will host in-person faith formation classes for our students as we did last year. One significant difference is that we will not serve family dinners this fall, due to risks from COVID. However, classes will be held as normal, twice monthly on Wednesday evenings from 6:30pm to 7:30pm. Masks will be required and social distancing will be maintained, which should be relatively easy for us since our class sizes are quite small. I would also recommend that adults who may have attended our faith formation parent sessions on Wednesday nights, even though they do not have children in the program, please attend the Basics of Catholicism series on Tuesday evenings, in order to keep the number of people in the building on Wednesday nights to a minimum.

Because I realize that there may be parents who are concerned about allowing their children to attend faith formation classes in person because of health concerns, we do have an online option should you wish to opt out. And, the parish staff has a totally online option available to us in the unfortunate case that COVID cases multiply quickly in our area and measures to further mitigate spread, such as canceling in-person classes, are necessary. Our religious education director, Cindy Rowlee, will be sending out an email next week to all faith formation parents with much greater detail about our plans for faith formation to be carried out safely and well. I just wanted to let the parish know about the basics of our plan.

Second, I will be taking a little time off in the coming weeks (Thursday, August 20 – Friday, August 28), and so during this time, I will not be sending email updates. I will also not be conducting podcasts during this time. Father Michael will be covering the weekend Masses as well as sacramental emergencies while I am gone. Thank you Fr. Michael!

Finally, I just would like to let all parishioners know that I realize this is a very difficult time in our society right now. If you are like me, you are probably feeling what I call, “COVID – fatigue.” It could be that you are feeling frustrated with the nature and level of safety protocols, cancellations, and postponements. Or, it could be that you are dearly missing opportunities to have close contact with family and friends. Perhaps you are feeling particularly nervous about the spread of this virus, and the possibility of catching it. I realize that many people feel many different ways about the severity of this illness and the appropriate responses to it.

Be that as it may, I believe that the answer to “COVID – fatigue” is the same: Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who gives us patience to persevere, even in doing things that we may not like or understand, because they are being asked of us from our religious superior while we are at Church. Jesus is the one who comforts us due to felt distance from our family members and friends. Jesus is the one who reassures us that He is with us when we feel overwhelmed by anxiety and fear. Jesus is the answer!

And so, brothers and sisters, my encouragement to you remains the same- run to Jesus! He is our Lord, our Savior, our closest companion. He will guide us, comfort us and save us. This is why I continue to harp on the importance of daily time specifically set aside for prayer, especially now during this pandemic- because we need Jesus!

And be at peace, because nothing is a surprise to God, and God loves you more than you can begin to imagine, and He knows you better than you know yourself. God bless you and hold you close to His Sacred Heart!

Fr. Steve Laflamme