

26 June 2020

Dear Parishioners,

As we continue to journey through this unusual summer, we are reminded in our Gospel this weekend that to be a true disciple we need to pick up our cross daily. The crosses that the Covid-19 virus has placed on many of us are by no means too heavy for us to bare. The Church, the world, our communities, and families are forever changed by the cross borne of this virus, and these crosses that can only be fully understood through prayer, in faith, and with hope.

Many of us carry crosses of financial strain, healthcare uncertainties, social interaction, and losing the freedoms that we enjoyed prior to this virus. We realize that people around the world are facing these and many other crosses. As a faith community, we must reignite our trust in Jesus. Through prayer we lift our voice and the needs of others to a merciful and loving God. God is present with the sick and dying, health care professionals, the scientific community, leaders of government, and with each of us as we together journey with this pandemic. God will help us beat this hidden enemy that has brought great discord to our world and our very lives.

For a time, we will bear many new crosses that we were not ready for and be prepared to shoulder crosses that the future may bring. Through prayer we unite ourselves to one another. We are each other's advocates before God. Let us remember, also, that we have heavenly advocates in the Angels and the Saints. Do not forget your loved ones that have gone before us to the feast of Heaven. They all pray unceasingly for us before Love, that is God. Call upon their intercession and be confident that they will intercede. Many times, Pope Francis has called upon the intercession of the Mother of the Great Physician. Let us often unite our prayer with his Marian prayer during this pandemic - an invisible weapon to fight an invisible threat to life.

An update on parish life: We are moving along slowly and cautiously. Both parish offices are open, but we ask that you please use the phone or email rather than coming into the office. Some staff members are still working remotely and will check for messages periodically throughout the day. I have started to allow small group meetings in the Saint James Parish Center and Saint Clement Hall, limited access to the Saint Clement Chapel, and we continue to support the needy with the Saint James community meals. There will be new guidelines coming soon from the diocese on best practices for parish ministries and group gatherings. Each parish will adjust as necessary when these guidelines are posted. There will be another meeting this week between the Saint James Parish Finance Council and with Oster Services to clarify parking easements as we continue discussions on the selling of the school and rectory buildings. Many people took advantage of the free hostas at Saint Clement, and donations are being collected for the new landscaping.

Once again on behalf of Fr. Deo and myself, we would like to thank everyone for your patience and, to those that are attending Mass, for following the guidelines. Cleaning stations are now in place for your convenience. We are still discerning how to do public confessions, but we are willing to hear confessions by appointment. A special word of gratitude for your support of your parish community during these financially stressful times. Remember that collection baskets are

available in the back of the church at all Masses. You are encouraged to leave your collection as you leave the church after Mass. Contributions can also be mailed or dropped in the mail slot parish the office at any time. Online giving options are available through the parish website. The next set of Saint James collection envelopes are now available outside the parish office.

As we prepare ourselves to celebrate Independence Day, let us remember in prayer, in particular, those Americans who have died because of Covid-19 this year.

Pope Francis' prayer during the pandemic.

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

*At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain,
with steadfast faith.*

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that,

as you did at Cana of Galilee,

joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,

to conform ourselves to the Father's will

and to do what Jesus tells us:

*He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us,
through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.*

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

*Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O
glorious and blessed Virgin*