

Dear Parish Family,

Greetings in the Lord!

As we begin the 3rd week of “stay at home,” I pray this note finds you and your family healthy and safe. To say it’s been a difficult time is understating the realities as we do our part in stopping the spread of COVID-19. We all have an important role to play. All the priests and I are in thoughtful prayer for you and your families as we weather this storm...but be confident in the Lord Jesus Christ that this will pass.

While it’s been a challenging time, it is also a time of great grace and hope. The numbers of people we are reaching through the live-streaming of Holy Mass and other prayer experiences has been a sign of that hope. In addition, the children of the Academy of St. Paul are still learning because of our wonderful faculty who are teaching through a “remote classroom” system; our Youth Group are still having “virtual meetings” on Tuesday nights with our Youth Minister; men from our Men’s Ministry “get together” on a conference call every evening to pray the Holy Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy as they support one another in prayer, and our Music Minister has been providing not only technological assistance, but also live-streamed music that can help us feel the presence of the Lord. In addition, we have been and will continue to live-stream events to our Faith Formation children, we are still trying to support seniors (and others) in need, and Women’s and other groups have virtual Bible sharing and discussions rooted in faith while each person is safe at home in their own living room! Because we want to be aware as best we can of people in our community during this time, Donna Schifano has been working with Ramsey Responds and we will be partnering with them to provide food that will be delivered to those in need. Watch your email and app--soon we will be communicating with you how you can donate non-perishable food items to your neighbors through our collaboration.

Among these many signs of vitality and hope, still we have challenges to meet. We want to thank those of you who signed on to Parish Giving over the past few weeks (this number grew 20%). Parish Giving is a great way to support your parish on a regular basis, and it allows us to be better able to predict what financial resources we have to work with. If you are able to participate it would be a great help. (Instructions attached). We also want to thank those who have come by the Parish Office to drop off donations. In this time when many of you are unsure of your own personal financial and employment situations, we know the sacrifice you are making to keep Christ’s church of St. Paul as healthy as possible. And we know that God, who invites us to sacrificial alms-giving during Lent and all year long, also sees what we do.

All this being said, the impact of COVIC-19 on the financial situation of our parish is still substantial. Typically, the offertory collection for Easter Sunday is the second largest all year long- this year we anticipate it to be only a fraction of what it normally would be. Current and projected revenue reductions will force the parish to reduce the parish staff by laying off some employees and reducing the hours of others. This is a difficult and heartbreaking thing, most especially because each member of our staff is valuable in their own way and contributes to the good of the Church. For this reason, we hope these staff changes will only be temporary. Let us thank and pray for our terrific staff, that God will bless them and keep them safe.

We ask each of you to consider once again ways you might support St. Paul parish, both materially and through your prayers. Later this week, I will be sending out another letter discussing ways we will be able to celebrate Holy Week and Easter in this time of social distancing. May we enter this Sacred Time in our church year with faith and trust that Christ,

who rose from the dead, is still transforming lives in this present moment. For Him, through Him, and in Him we do all that we do. In Him alone do we find our peace.

Sincerely in Christ,

Father John Gabriel and the Parish Finance Committee

[PARISH GIVING INSTRUCTIONS ATTACHED](#)