

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

My Brothers and Sisters,

For two consecutive weekends now we have not gathered around the table of the Lord, as we used to do, to celebrate the mass as one family. Who would ever imagine that such a thing would ever happen in our lifetime? The sad reality is that our archbishop has ordered that all churches in the archdiocese be closed – even for private prayer – until further notice. I wonder how many of us saw this coming. I most certainly did not! The whole reality has thrown our world into a state of confusion, untold stress and anxiety. Many families are on edge, especially those with young children and older folks. To “Go home and stay home” will not be easy. To maintain the physical-distance rule will remarkably impact the way we interact with one another in the weeks, if not months, to come. In all this, let us not lose hope. Together we shall pull through and this evil will one day be a thing of the past.

### **Trust in God**

Let us put our trust in the Lord Jesus, who sympathizes with us in our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15). In this Sunday's gospel, He was moved with pity and wept at the death of His friend, Lazarus. He did not stop there; He shines the light of His love and compassion into and onto the dark meaninglessness into which our fallen world has been plunged. Similarly, He calls us during this unsettling time to look after each other and, in doing that, we carry His Light to everybody. That's how we are the light of the world. As always, we have to look after the feeble, the vulnerable, the suicidal, the lonely, and the frightened. We can do this in many ways – a phone call, a wave through the window to somebody inside their house, or to a police officer or a bus driver while we are out walking our dogs. Our wave or our phone call might be the only contact somebody has on any given day.

### **A Time of Prayer**

We also need to pray. As you can see, since we cannot come to our church to pray as we used to do, let's pray on our own, let's pray more in our families at home or with friends and family on Skype or FaceTime; let's accept Pope Francis' call to pray for our ravaged world. Let's make a point of saying the rosary every day, even though some of us don't always do that. There is power in prayer, as we well know. I invite you all to pray with Fr. Rick and me from your homes or wherever you may be. Think of those times that we gather at our church to celebrate the sacrament of the Eucharist either on weekdays or weekends. Let us consider those times as sacred and unite with our brothers and sisters in praying for a speedy containment of this virus and the healing of all those affected by it. Let us all pray hard for the people on the frontline: doctors, nurses, paramedics, hospital chaplains and all those who interact with the sick.

### **My Commitment**

During this time of crisis when I know that so many of you are stressed out and frightened, I commit myself to a sacred time of prayer every day. I want you to know that at 3:00 p.m. every day for as long as this crisis will last I will be on my knees in the Blessed Sacrament chapel praying for each and every one of you, for your health and your spiritual and physical well-being. Be assured of that.

### **Some Updates**

Fr. Rick, Deacon James and I have begun to telephone parishioners, to check up on them and to see how they're doing. This project will unfold over the next couple weeks. Some have expressed a desire to volunteer, and we are noting this for future needs. Others have asked how to continue donations. The archdiocese has provided guidance and we will implement their suggestions in the days to come. We will continue to check up on our parishioners, especially the elderly ones, regularly and also provide weekly updates. Some of you have seen priests hearing confessions outside. We will begin this practice as well, by appointment for now, and perhaps by scheduling a dedicated time for this ministry, as warranted. Fr. Rick has begun to offer daily Mass online. This is a new endeavour that will take time to figure out, so we appreciate your patience. If you are looking for additional resources online to help you practise and enrich your faith, check out FORMED.org. It is an amazing Catholic resource with materials for all ages. Here is our parish code: 7CMMWR. I pray God may give us the courage and the inner strength to navigate through these troubled times.

God is Good...All the Time!!!

Fr. Paul