

March 17, 2020

Dear Parishioner,

After consultation and considerable prayer, the Archbishop has decided – out of an abundance of caution and with devotion to the common good – to take steps aimed at slowing down the spread of the coronavirus, to flatten the curve, as they say, so as not to overburden the healthcare system.

We, at St. Athanasius and St. Francis will be implementing the following immediately (March 17, 2020) until further notice:

- **All public celebrations of Holy Mass are canceled.** The Archbishop has dispensed all Catholics in the Archdiocese of Dubuque from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.
- **Funerals, scheduled Weddings, and scheduled Baptisms** will continue to be held, but will be limited to the immediate family, or at least to no more persons than the up-to-date CDC guidelines allow (as of 3/17/20: **10 people**). Funeral dinners and public visitations will not be allowed.
- **All other communal liturgies will also be canceled**, including our communal penance services and weekly recitation of the Stations of the Cross. Private, one-on-one confessions will be made available weekly at times TBD, and are always available by appointment, just call the office.
- **Wednesday Youth Faith Formation** classes/activities are canceled as long as school is canceled. Lori or Nicole will be in contact with 2nd Graders in preparation for First Holy Communion.
- **All events, activities, organization meetings, parish meetings, etc.** (whether held at the church or off-site) are canceled. (This includes staff meetings, KC meetings, CDA meetings, Finance/Pastoral/FF mtgs, choir practices, RCIA mtgs, etc.) Any and all essential decisions should be handled by leadership via phone/email. ["Out of Hibernation" has already been postponed to a date TBD.]
- **All events, activities, organization meetings hosted at the church or the school** are to be canceled: including Jesup AA, sports-teams' practices, family reunions, etc.
- **Regular and routine visits to nursing homes, care facilities, hospitals, and the homebound** will be suspended for the time being. Families are asked to keep Fr. Dole in the know about the conditions of loved-ones. In cases of emergency, risk of extreme illness, and especially in the danger of death, Fr. Dole IS ALWAYS, always available for Anointings, Confessions, Viaticum, Pastoral Care... so PLEASE, please call!
- **If you are homebound or needing to be quarantined** and are unable to buy groceries, pick up medication or any other essentials please call the office, 319-827-6682. We will try to assist you or direct you to resources in the community.

I will be working to provide materials, prayers, reflections, etc. to supplement those already to be provided. Links and resources will be added to our website along with this information in the coming days. Already, we know that:

- **During this time, the Archbishop will live stream a celebration of Holy Mass each Sunday**, as well as the Chrism Mass (and the Triduum, if the situation has not changed by then).
- **During this time, the Archbishop will lead the Rosary each week on Thursday....**

- **Fr. Dole will be posting video reflections on the Stations of the Cross** every other day on the website.
- **Fr. Dole will be preparing a ‘Liturgy before a Meal’ for each Sunday.** It will be something for you and your family to pray before a Sunday meal, reflecting on the Word of God and bringing our hearts and intercessions to Jesus. Those, too, will be posted on the website.
- **Also, during this time, the church in Jesup will be opened during the daytime** for prayer, picking up bulletins, dropping items off, etc.

Know also that all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Dubuque will be invited to join together in a **day of fasting, abstinence, and prayer on Wednesday, 25 March 2020**; this will not be obligatory but will be a good opportunity for a shared spiritual response to the present difficulties and disease.

In the words of our Archbishop:

God, come to our assistance. Lord, make haste to help us.

Mary, health of the sick, pray for us.

St. Raphael, patron of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, and patron of healing, pray for us.

fr. Dole
