

March 17, 20

My Dear Parishioners,

Be prepared, this is a long one...

So much has changed to our way of life over these last few days and it's disconcerting to hear experts predict this could be the new norm for quite some time; but even with these challenges we face as a nation, we've been so blessed and ARE blessed to live right here in America.

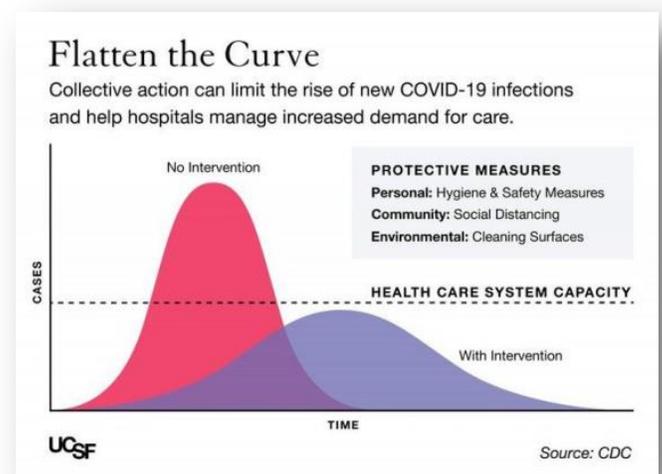
America has the largest economy in the world, the strongest military in the world, expansive infrastructure (minus the potholes and slow trains!), world-class healthcare (although I know access can be a challenge to some) and while there may be a high degree of political dysfunction in DC, governmental transitions of power and institutions have always remained stable and peaceful. I guess because of all of this, I saw things happening in other countries and I thought "that can't happen here...and yet, here we are (along with much of Europe). Thank God however, we as a nation have tremendous resources to fight this growing pandemic.

Just like you, I worry about family, especially those with preexisting conditions (like my brother) and the elderly (my mom would slap me right now if she were here but sorry mom, you and dad are now in that revered category). All of you are part of my family too—my spiritual family, I've been praying for all the members of this parish community with the same intensity as I do for my own biological family. Also, while our health and safety are paramount, I worry about our own parish's financial stability as you worry about your own family's fiscal health (you can't help but be worried); this is especially true in light of this most recent announcement from our new Archbishop:

"All public Masses in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are suspended effective noon tomorrow, Wednesday, March 18, and until further notice due to the ongoing public health concerns related to the coronavirus (COVID-19)." – Archbishop Nelson Perez

This is unprecedented and there is no specific end in sight. Don't get me wrong, I think our bishop made the right decision because we need to pull together as a nation to "flatten the curve" so as to prevent our health institutions from becoming overwhelmed (I think about what happened in China and Italy and we can't allow that to happen here in our nation).

Let me give you some bullet points as to what St. Francis is doing to help "flatten the curve" while still attending to your spiritual needs. All of this is in effect until the end of March...let's take things two weeks at a time at this point.



- The Parish office is officially closed although staff will be in, staggered here and there, to make sure things are current. You can always call (610-543-0848) or email (frtrialies@gmail.com) and these methods of communication will be answered periodically. If there is a true medical emergency, call the parish phone and it will connect you to an emergency line where you can leave a message and I'll call back within a few minutes.
- All of our parish activities are on hiatus though the end of the month. A reevaluation will occur based on what the CDC recommends.
- Although public **Sunday Masses** are suspended and the requirement to attend them is lifted, I am not going to chain-lock the doors by any means, but you have been asked **not to attend**. The Mass will have no homily and no music (and the answer is no, we cannot continue that once this virus passes!). It is important to remember that Masses will continue to be offered here privately at St. Francis each and every day for the spiritual benefit of all of you. All listed intentions will be fulfilled as well. Thank God the efficacy of the Mass doesn't depend on me, it is the salvific work of our Savior to our Father and really is a powerhouse of grace for us all!
 - You might want to consider the following:
 - Our church building will be open throughout the morning until 1 pm on Sunday, consider stopping by for some private time in prayer. We are going to label the pews so we can maintain the proper social distancing (6 feet).
 - Make a spiritual communion at home to unite yourself with all the Masses throughout the world (look at the **RESOURCES** page at the end of this letter).
 - There are a ton of parishes around the nation that offer live-streamed Masses (look at the **RESOURCES** page at the end of this letter for a few links).
 - The Rosary can be a difficult devotion to "get into" but it's a powerful one; history attests to this truth! This may sound odd but try the live-stream rosary being offered here by the Archdiocese (look at the **RESOURCES** page at the end of this letter for a few links).
- Public **Daily Masses** are suspended. Most of the daily Masses will be offered in the rectory chapel but for the next two Wednesdays (March 25th and April 1st), we will have Mass and Adoration (Immediately after the 8 AM Mass until 3 PM) in our church. Please **avoid** Mass (although the doors will not be chain-locked) but feel free to **attend** Adoration by sitting in the labeled pews that maintain safe social distancing.
- We will have **Confession** on Saturday at our normal time from 3-3:45 PM. Again, folks will need to line up 6 feet apart and I will be wearing a N95 mask for your protection and mine (don't be offended). Also, no face to face confession, only behind the screen which will have a particulate filter attached to it.

- Funerals (social distancing) and Baptisms (social distancing) can be continued.

As you probably know, our new Archbishop is of Cuban descent and he has a big devotion to "la Virgen de la Caridad" – Our Lady of Charity (I also hear he has access to Cuban Cigars, which I'm hoping is true!). Anyway, I discovered this image randomly just after my ordination to the priesthood back in 2010 and have been devoted to it ever since.

This is an oversimplification of the devotion but basically, as you can see from the image below, the three youth set out by boat to find salt that can be used to preserve the small amount of meat they have for their family and neighbors. A storm arises. In the youth's time of need, the Blessed Mother appears to assist them—the storms calm and the sun appears once again. Our Lady of Charity will do the same for us as well—if we implore her help and assistance.

Our Mother of Charity, who walked on the road of stormy seas and calmed them, pray for us!!!

In Christ,

Rev. Matthew J. Tralies

Rev. Matthew Tralies
Parochial Administrator, St. Francis of Assisi



RESOURCES

Spiritual Communion Prayer

My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least **spiritually** into my heart. ... I adore You in the Sacrament of Your love, the indescribable Eucharist.

Online Masses

<http://www.catholictv.org/masses/catholictv-mass>

Or just “Google” Live Streamed Mass

Archbishop Perez has a Facebook page that will have live-streaming on Sundays at
11 am

The Rosary Live

8 PM every night at phillyevang.org,

Recap of when our Church is OPEN

Saturdays: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm for confessions and personal prayer

Sundays: 7:00 am – 12:30 pm for personal prayer

Wednesday: 7:30 am – 3:00 pm for personal prayer and Adoration

Must maintain appropriate social distancing