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Tuesday, March 17, 2020
Feast of St. Patrick, Bishop

Dear parish family of Our Lady of the Lake,

I write this letter to you amidst great trial and sadness right now in the midst of the world, our country, and even our church right now. As many of you know by now because of the serious concerns around the COVID-19 Coronavirus Bishop Persico has suspended all public Masses (both Sunday and weekday) for the Diocese of Erie until further notice. If my heart is so broken by this, I can't imagine how much more so Bishop Persico's is to have had to make this decision.

As your pastor and spiritual father, the greatest gift I can offer to you is the gift of Jesus in the Holy Mass and in receiving Him in the Eucharist. I know that this is out of my hands (and the Bishop's too), but I feel like I am depriving my children of your greatest food and nourishment. With that said, I am with you to navigate through these times in these days and weeks ahead. Here are a few ways that I want to continue to guide and accompany you going forward.

- Sunday is still the Lord's Day. So, I am encouraging families and all of us to pray and worship together on Sunday. Here are a few ideas:
 - o Read and pray with the Sunday readings. An easy way to find them is on the U.S. Bishop's website. (www.usccb.org)
 - o Pray the Rosary and/or the Divine Chaplet together
 - o Pray together for the healing of all those affected by this pandemic and for a very swift end to this.
 - o Gather all of your intentions together and pray for each other, your families and friends, your parish, the poor, the sick, and all the needs of this world and the Church.
 - o Make a ***Spiritual Communion***. Even though you can't physically receive Holy Communion Jesus truly still wants to dwell in your heart, soul, and life. A Spiritual Communion is a way to do this. Do this daily and even many times throughout the day. Here is an example of a Spiritual Communion prayer:

"My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot receive you at this moment sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen."

- Our church will be open for prayer. I am working on a schedule where I can offer times of Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration for you to come and spend time at the Lord's

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feet and at His throne, receiving His great mercy and love for you. Also, this is an opportunity for us to continue to come before Him and beg Him for a swift end to this pandemic in our country and throughout the world. I will keep you all posted when these times of Exposition and Adoration are. Remember, though, Jesus is *always* present to us in the Eucharist and waits for us with great humility and love in the tabernacle.

- The other sacraments of healing will continue to be offered to everyone in need.
 - o I will be hearing confessions during the regularly scheduled time of 3 – 4pm on Saturday afternoons.
 - o I will also be hearing confessions during at least part of the time when there is Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament happening in the Church.
 - o I will hear your confessions *anytime* day or night. If anyone is need of the Sacrament of Reconciliation outside of those times please contact me (fr.daniel.hoffman@gmail.com) (814-734-3113) and I will make any arrangement with you.
 - o Anyone in need of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick please contact me personally or the parish office. I will be there as soon as I can be for every call.
 - o Visits to the Edinboro Manor and other nursing homes have been temporarily suspended, but in an emergency I will be there.
 - o Also, please inform me of any family members who are ill and, in the hospital, so that I can get there to make a visit, pray with them, and anoint them.
 - o Regular visits and Communion Calls to the homebound on Sundays are suspended for the time being.

Throughout this time, I will be keeping you all updated via the myParish app, the parish Facebook page, and the parish website (www.ololake.com). I will also be posting other sources of spiritual nourishment and food for all of us to remain close to Jesus' most loving and merciful Heart. Christ is everything we need right now, and we need to trust in Him completely. The Lord will continue to be our healing, our refuge, and our hope. Every day I will be offering a private Mass for all of you, your families, and your intentions. I love you all so much! We will all get through this together!

Your spiritual father and pastor,

Fr. Dan

Rev. Daniel R. Hoffman