

A LETTER TO THE WHOLE PARISH
FROM FATHER MARCELLO
IN THE MIDST OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
MARCH 18, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

At this time of global emergency, even though we are prevented by the current situation from seeing each other in person at Mass, I want to continue to be in touch with you and to be close to you and your families. You are never far from my thoughts and prayers, and this is true even more so in these days of uncertainty. I want you to know that I am with you.

One thing we know for sure is that “in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health,” God’s closeness to us is the one constant in our lives, the one thing of which we can always be certain. To my knowledge, the last time public Masses were suspended in much of our country was during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918, so this experience is unlike anything we have known in our lifetimes.

Added to the suffering brought on by the danger and uncertainty of the present situation is the suffering of being separated, at least for a time, from in-person access to Mass, which truly is the source and summit of our faith and of our whole lives. Although public Masses in the presence of the faithful are currently suspended until at least April 3, Father Bochanski and I will continue to celebrate Mass privately here each day, mindful of the words of St. Pio of Pietrelcina (“Padre Pio”) that “it would be easier for the world to exist without the sun than without the Holy Mass.” Father Bochanski and I will fulfill all of the Sunday and weekday Mass intentions privately.

During these Masses we will be remembering all our parishioners and friends, especially those who are most vulnerable in our community. If you would like me to remember your family *by name* at these private Masses each day, or if you have any other intentions you would like me to remember at the Altar, please email them to me at: support@stcatherinetrumbull.com, and in the subject line, write “Prayer Intention”.

Each weekend, for as long as public Masses are suspended, we will record a video of Sunday Mass celebrated in church by either Father Bochanski or me, we will post this video on our website, and will email a link of it to everyone who is on our email distribution list. We are also working on livestreaming daily Mass and providing a video of Stations of the Cross for Friday evenings. If you would like to sign up for these, please email support@stcatherinetrumbull.com, and in the subject line, write “Sign up”. Feel free to pass this information along to family and friends, neighbors and co-workers.

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With all this said, **our church will not close, but will continue to be open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. for private prayer in the presence of Christ himself in the Blessed Sacrament, reserved in the tabernacle.** The red flickering lamp high above the sanctuary reminds us of Christ's enduring presence in the tabernacle, He who is with us always. His closeness to us, and his presence with us, are our greatest consolation during this perilous time.

In addition, each Sunday afternoon, from 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m., the church will be open, and the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for Adoration and silent prayer. I ask everyone to remember to maintain appropriate social distancing.

A vigil lamp burns at this moment before the statue of the Blessed Mother in church, representing our prayers to her, as we invoke her never-failing intercession for an end to this pandemic.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) will be available in the McClinch Family Center on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 until 8:00 p.m. (or longer, if necessary; please note the new time) beginning on Tuesday, March 24. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will also take place at the same time. For sacramental emergencies, please call us at the parish office. Though the office is closed and staff members are working from home, we are checking messages regularly and are ready to respond quickly.

So, to recap:

- Church open for private prayer Mon – Fri 8 am – 1 pm
- Eucharistic Adoration Sun 1 – 3 pm in church; Tue 6 – 8 pm in the Family Center
- Confession Tue 6 – 8 pm in the Family Center (no Saturday confessions)
- Sunday Mass, Stations, etc., will be recorded and emailed to you.

I will stay in touch with you throughout this situation. Through letters such as this, and through our parish email and social media communications, I will keep you updated and connected. Above all, let's all intentionally maintain our sense of faith and hope – come what may – and let's continue to stay in touch with each other, above all through prayer.

*God bless you,
Father Marcello*