

Good morning, Fam.

Please forgive so long a period of silence, I have been finding it difficult to find words that can properly express my thoughts during this time.

It may sound like an obvious reminder but I want to let all of our family know that I am a Catholic Priest and as such I pray The Mass and The Divine Office even when people are not looking. So, until I get my YouTube account up and running (by this weekend for sure) and can send you the daily Mass each day please be supported by the knowledge that as your spiritual Father I have a plan to provide for those entrusted to my care. And fortunately, as we continue to mentally digest our present reality there are a few things that we can do to make life a little more tolerable.

1st: Pray. Specifically I would like to entrust to the Father of each household the orchestration of a daily recitation of The Holy Rosary.

2nd: Check in on the elderly and volunteer to help them avoid crowded spaces by adding their shopping list to your own.

N.B. As I was in Kroger on Monday shopping for my parents and grandparents I noticed that all but a handful of customers were younger than my parents. However, the CDC warns that this is precisely the demographic most affected by a possible infection.

To mitigate opportunities for infection I've asked Corrie to compile a list of those willing to shop for parishioners and neighbors in the 70+ age group. However, at present we have more volunteers than we have people in need of this service. I take this opportunity to encourage those in need of help not to allow pride to prevent others the opportunity to exercise corporal works of mercy.

Consider this, recipients of this ministry will be able to exercise the virtue of humility and helpers will be able to exercise the virtue of mercy. See, everybody wins but the devil 😊.

3rd: The Sacraments. I understand right now that "the elephant in the room," is our access to the sacraments. At present there is a prohibition on public Masses and although I have a funeral on Friday morning for a young man who died this past week I am only able to permit members of his nuclear family. The question is, why take such a drastic step?

Folks, from the limited information I have been able to gather I have to support the initiative of our bishop for the next two weeks. At present scientists are themselves still learning about this new virus. What seems to be agreed upon by the CDC is that the majority of our population are only able to spread this virus asymptotically for 24 to 48hrs. However, there seem to be a certain number of the persons in every population who can spread this virus asymptotically for a period of 24 “days”. Ergo, in two more weeks we should have a more realistic understanding of how widespread this disease has become in our local community. And, until we approach that 24th day after the initial patient from Bourbon County was diagnosed there will be no public Masses in Paris.

My hope is that this period will remind each of us of how precious is The Holy Sacrifice of The Mass. May it serve as a period of reparation for those times when we received The Blessed Sacrament unworthily. May it be a period of repentance for those times when we were perhaps tempted to equivocate The Mass, The New Testament Sacrifice established and mandated by Jesus Christ Himself with the worship offered by any other community.

4th: Proper Perspective + Accurate Information = Reasons for Hope.

Yes, daily life will be changed by this virus for the foreseeable future. Yes, many families will be unable to sustain their present “standard of living”. But, guess what?

The potential of our “quality of life” being improved exponentially during (and after) this crisis is very, very high.

It may soon get tiresome, but is anyone other than myself happy to go home after work without the prospect of traveling back and forth from meeting to meeting?

Fam, that time that we’re spending with our loved ones, those forgotten family stories that we’re retelling to new generations and those recipes that we finally have time to attempt...that’s what “quality of life” is made up of.

And...dare I say it...yes, the attention we now pay to those things we had come to disregard as insignificant (be they prayers, stories, games, food) is how cultures are established and restored.

In large part this improvement to the quality of our lives will come as a result of our becoming more aware of how vulnerable we are to the smallest of foes (a virus) and thereby our becoming more aware how precious human life is and how much we are in need of A SAVIOR.

All the money in the world will be of little effect for those who've taken to bed with this microscopic enemy. It is a sickness that must run its course.

This new enemy has no regard for our social status or even our level of education. And, like Jesus Christ, the effects of this virus and the fear it generates on our lives are not contingent upon our belief in their existence. I cannot see fear, it is an emotion yet, I can clearly see its effect on my community.

And in like manner, I cannot see this virus, but I can see it's effect on the world around me.

This invisible virus has dramatically changed my life but my renewed trust in Jesus Christ is also changing my life...and for the better.

Fam, we have been given sound advice, "store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven" says The Lord.

That we will have an "eternal life" is a given but, our destination for that eternity is determined by our relationship with Jesus Christ through The Church He founded as an ark of salvation, an ark so large that it can easily provide safety for all the world.

Pray for me and know that I pray for each of you.

Humbled and honored to have been chosen to be your pastor at this time in the history of our Church and our community.

FDF