

From the Pastor

Dear friends:

For the next while, all my ministry will be done via telephone and on line. Fr. Marc will remain at home with his mother. I'm sure they both appreciate this immensely. Please keep my mother in prayer. She is still struggling in a St. John's, NL Hospital, having had a bad fall a few nights ago. Not being able to see her family is very tough for her. May God keep all our parents safe during this time of crisis.

As of last night, given the new government regulations concerning COVID-19, the church will have to remain closed for your protection and for our protection. Being in the downtown area, we have had a couple of bizarre incidents in the church the past few days, even with myself present. It's best for everyone's safety that we keep the church closed. We each need to do our part in keeping 'physical distancing'.

To fulfill our Mass Intentions, and to offer the greatest of all prayers of the Church for an end to this pandemic, I will continue to celebrate Mass each day at 7:00 PM. It will be live on my Facebook page for those who wish to follow along. Fr. Marc will also celebrate Mass in his home.

The parish office has already been closed to the public for 2 weeks now, but the girls will be working with reduced hours, and answering the phones on Mon - Fri from 10 AM-2 PM. Many are still calling about weddings, confirmations, baptisms and other sacraments and events. If you need to drop something off to the office, simply ring the office bell during those hours, and place it in the mail box.

Our maintenance will also work with reduced hours, and maintain the upkeep of the property and buildings. Although we have reduced hours for all the staff, without physical contact with the general public, I simply cannot reduce our staff's pay. I think that's the Gospel thing to do in a time of crisis. Some have asked about Sunday Offertory

envelopes. In time, we certainly will need them. Either save them until the pandemic is over, or feel free to bring them to the office door during the new reduced office hours. The girls have safety measures in place.

I know some of you have loved ones in various hospitals throughout the Region. Unfortunately, no family can visit them. Some of you have inquired about clergy hospital visits. There are two priests now on-call for the Greater Niagara General Hospital. And two priests for each hospital in the Region. This is for EMERGENCY only. The switchboard will contact us immediately and we will attend.

Both myself and Fr. Stephen have participated in COVID-19 Training with the NHS Infection Control at St. Catharines Hospital. I feel most comfortable serving in this capacity. Again, this will be for emergencies only. If the person dying is a COVID-19 suspect, or a confirmed case, then every precaution will be taken to protect the priest. We have gone through every scenario with the Infection Control Professionals, and even practised putting on and taking off every piece of necessary equipment. So, worry not, your loved ones will receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

Let us continue to pray for each other. If everyone does their part to keep from spreading this virus, hopefully it will pass sooner than later. Check in on your elderly neighbours, especially those who are alone, or who have no family in the area. Together, we can all get through this. Be safe. Be kind. Spread love, not the virus! Amen.