



# ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH

60 BYRD AVENUE, BLOOMFIELD, N.J. 07003 • 973-338-9190

March 19, 2020

Solemnity of St. Joseph

Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Patron of the Universal Church

Dear Parish Family,

I pray that this letter finds you and your family doing well in these difficult and challenging times. As I write this letter the news regarding the coronavirus pandemic is literally changing by the minute.

I want to be sure that my words get to every one of our registered families so I'm sending this letter by "snail mail", as we only have a small number of your email addresses.

Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the health and well-being of our people Cardinal Tobin has suspended the public celebration of the Mass at this time and has granted each of you a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass during this time.

These last several days have been surreal. For the first time since our parish was founded in 1939 Mass was not celebrated publicly. While the Eucharist is not publicly celebrated Fr. Anton, Fr. John, Fr. Charlie and I are celebrating Mass and fulfilling the Mass intentions. We have all promised to make a Holy Hour each day to pray for you, the people of the parish, and for those who are suffering from the virus and for those who care for them.

According to Canon Law a Pastor must ensure that each Sunday a Mass is celebrated with the intention of praying for the people of our parish. On Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, the priests celebrated Mass for the intentions of the Masses that day. As Pastor I chose the People of the Parish intention. As I celebrated the Mass for you I felt the importance of this prayer intention more than ever before.

During this time the church will remain open M-F 8am – 12:30pm, Saturday 9am - 6pm and Sunday 8am - 1pm for private prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. I do ask that you kindly follow the CDC's guidance and keep a safe distance from each other during this time.

Mass is available on TV: EWTN: Optimum 135, FIOS 285, <https://www.EWTN.com>  
Catholic Faith Network (CFN): Optimum 137, FIOS 296 <https://www.catholicfaithnetwork.org/>; or  
on Relevant Radio: 1430 AM or <https://www.relevantradio.com>.

During this time of "Eucharistic Fast", as Cardinal Tobin has called it, I invite you to create a prayer routine for your day. Discover (or rediscover) the Liturgy of the Hours by praying Morning, Evening, and Night Prayers. Pray the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Divine Mercy Chaplet, etc. At the end of this letter is the Memorare and a prayer by St. Francis that I would like to share with you.

While Mass will not be publicly celebrated at this time and you are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass, Sunday remains a holy day and I encourage you to pray using the rich resources of our Catholic Faith mentioned above. I also invite you to pray one Holy Hour with Our Lord each day. (Perhaps you can begin with 4 15-minute intervals.)

While spending this time in prayer please remember to keep the people of our wonderful parish in your prayers. We are all in this together. While we may be apart we are always connected and united by prayer.

Many people are saying the road ahead, though uncertain, may be difficult. This is true financially for you, your family, and for your parish. I am very concerned how this will affect your parish financially. I invite you to continue to support your parish as you normally do or as best as you can. I'm afraid that this crisis will have a devastating effect, because as you know, your parish relies mostly on the Sunday collection to fulfill the operational obligations (utilities, insurances, contracted services and staff).

As I mentioned in the beginning of this letter, I have sent this out via “snail mail” to ensure that each of our registered families will receive it. I am looking to update our email “blast” system, that is now in place, so that you can receive timely updates and developing news about the parish. If you would like to receive these please register at [www.stachurchbloomfield.com](http://www.stachurchbloomfield.com) and click on Parish Registration. Of course you can always check our website [www.stachurchbloomfield.com](http://www.stachurchbloomfield.com) ,Facebook: Saint Thomas the Apostle Church or Twitter: @stachurchnj.

We are in this difficult time together. As we are, I want to share with you words spoken by St. John Paul: “When everything seems lost or impossible, our most powerful weapon is prayer.”

Join me in prayer for everyone who is suffering with this virus, for those who care for them, especially our health care workers, for all our public leaders, and for the scientists looking for a cure.

May the Lord, Jesus, continue to bless and protect you and your family.

Our Lady, Pray for us! St. Thomas the Apostle, Pray for us!

Love,



**MEMORARE**

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,  
That never was it known  
That anyone who fled to thy protection  
Or sought thy intercession  
Was left unaided.  
Inspired by this thought,  
I fly unto thee, O Virgin or virgins, my mother.  
To thee do I come, before thee I stand  
Sinful and sorrowful.  
O, Mother of the Word Incarnate,  
Despise not my petitions,  
But in thy mercy, hear and answer me.  
AMEN.

**PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

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 at this moment  
receive You 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.