



March 17, 2020

Dear members and friends of St. Mary's,

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who is our constant hope and strength. We Christians have met countless dangerous challenges over the centuries because we know that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1) and that he provides the ultimate security of eternal life.

In this present COVID-19 crisis, we are called, as we always are, to love God by loving ourselves and our neighbors. This means taking all reasonable measures to keep ourselves safe and not to endanger others. Please visit [here](#) for one of the many examples of practical guidance.

Here is what St. Mary's is doing.

- Effective immediately for at least two weekends Sunday worship will be without a congregation. This means that a handful of people (less than ten) will celebrate the Eucharist at 10:00 am on Sunday and stream it live on Facebook and YouTube so that you can participate at home. The videos will be archived so that you can watch them at any time.
 - The 5:00 pm Saturday and the 8:00 Sunday Eucharists are cancelled for two weeks.
- Weekday worship will continue as scheduled. These services have only a handful of people so are within the current guidelines and enable us to keep a safe distance from one another. Many of these services will be streamed. Please do not feel any obligation to attend. We are maintaining them so that worship and prayer continue to be offered to God every day at St. Marys', for the church and for the world.
 - The Wednesday noon Eucharist will be at the main altar so that people can be spread out throughout the church.
- Pastoral visits in person are suspended except for last rites. Clergy and pastoral ministers will be reaching out by phone and email to stay in touch and to offer prayer and spiritual communion.

- Most studies and meetings are suspended or will be held by video-conference. Please check before coming.
- Penny Wise is closed until further notice.

We will have more details about how to worship on line and other matters tomorrow but I wanted to make sure you got this word right now.

When St. Paul writes to his Christians in Philippi saying, "Do not worry about anything," he does not mean be careless but be wise. He goes on to write:

In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

May God bless and keep you.

Fr. Michael