

Our Lady of Grace

Message from our Pastor



An Unforeseen Desert Journey

The canceling of church services is difficult for all faithful Catholics. We love Mass and the Eucharist and our parish missions and reconciliation services. My favorite part of being a priest is celebrating Mass and preaching, which is why I added an additional daily Mass shortly after I arrived here; since we have two priests, there wasn't an opportunity to say a daily public Mass when there was only one daily Mass.

I'm still saying Mass daily, but without a congregation, the experience, while prayerful, lacks a dimension that makes it more meaningful and beautiful.

I am grateful to Bishop Weisenburger and all bishops who have taken this brave and difficult, yet necessary, step to aid in stopping the spread of the corona virus. It would be imprudent and reckless to do otherwise.

There are some who say we should trust God and continue with business as usual. Experience tells me that they would be the first in line to criticize and accuse if Catholic churches became the epicenter of the virus' spread while businesses and schools were shut down.

The first gospel for Lent is always the temptations of Jesus. Jesus' rebuke of Satan applies here, "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test." Jesus said this when the devil tried to get him to throw himself from the parapet of the temple to put on a show to prove he is the Son of God. Continuing with gatherings in the midst of a pandemic that is spread through the air would fit in the category of putting God to the test, acting without reason and expecting God to do a miracle to show he is God.

Faith and reason go hand in hand in Catholic theology. It has always been so. We do not go against reason in situations like this pandemic.

I wouldn't be surprised if 99% of our Catholics understood the situation and supported our bishops' decision. Unfortunately, there are always those who take a bad situation and make it worse by complaining and grumbling and criticizing unnecessarily, just like the people in the desert with Moses.

I believe our faithful Catholics are strong and will continue to support the Church and our parish during this Lenten pilgrimage which has become a *desert* journey we couldn't have imagined a few weeks ago.

Our parish office will be closed for business, but the phone will be answered from 8:30am until 5:00pm Monday through Friday. We will continue to communicate through our parish website and Constant Contact with those who have provided email addresses.

The church will be opened for private prayer and adoration before the Lord in the Eucharist from 7:00am until 7:00pm, but please, no prayer groups or gatherings. Keep your distance from others if you enter the church. If people begin to gather in even small groups, we will be forced to lock the church.

I remember you in my daily Mass and prayers.

God bless you,

Fr. Jay Luczak