

My Dear Parishioners:



Early in the morning, the first day of the week, after Jesus was buried, Mary Magdalen went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus while it was still dark. She was in mourning, worried, and afraid. In mourning because she watched her Lord suffer a horrible death, worried because she did not know who would help roll away the stone from the tomb, and afraid that she would be arrested by the authorities. Despite these worries, as a disciple, she still went out into the darkness of the night guided by her faith. Upon arrival, she saw the stone rolled away, the burial cloths, and the empty tomb. None of it made sense until Jesus encountered her in the garden and spoke to her, calling her by name, Mary.

At that point her fears were relieved and she went to deliver the Good News of the Resurrection to the apostles and the word spread, and the Faith grew and the Church, born out of suffering from the blood and water that flowed from the broken body of Christ on the cross, multiplied and was strengthened for mission by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

After a long and penitential Lent, we members of the Church look forward to coming together to celebrate the central act of our faith, the Resurrection of Jesus, who feeds us with His Body and Blood and promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. This year, we are unable to come together as a parish family to celebrate the Resurrection nor to receive Our Lord in the Eucharist. Like the early Church which grew out of gatherings in believers' homes, we are in our own Upper Room, somewhat fearful and worried about what is to come. We are especially mindful and commend to prayer those who have contracted the virus and we pray for their recovery. We pray for all who protect and serve us in health care and public safety, putting others first. Finally, we commend to our Lord the souls of those who have died.

This world-wide virus makes us aware just how small the world community is today and how we are all part of the one human family with the same needs and hungers. As Catholics, even though we may be behind closed doors, we can still witness our faith through prayer, Spiritual Communion and the Corporal Works of Mercy. We can call a neighbor or person who is ill. We can leave groceries for them and pray with and for them. This is how the early Church came to be. We are still St. Ann's Strong, wherever we are gathered during this crisis. In each Mass your priests celebrate privately, we pray for the intention of the Mass and think of you and pray for you. If we can serve you in any way that is allowed, please call upon us. We are grateful for your care for us during this time and appreciate your continued financial commitment to the weekly offertory to support the work of our parish and school whether electronically through Parish Giving on our website or through the mail. Your messages to the rectory by phone or email will be answered as timely as possible.

In 1976, a large gathering of world-wide Catholics descended on Philadelphia, occupying Veteran Stadium, The Spectrum, and the Civic Center to profess our faith in Jesus, the Bread of Life who alone satisfies the hungers of the human family. When fed by the Bread of Life, we are filled, sustained and energized to go out and serve. You must be the visible Church if you must go to work, to get food, or go to a medical appointment. You must radiate hope on your face that things will get better. It may be you who brings peace and calm to someone you encounter like Jesus did to the fearful disciples in the upper room when he said: "Do not fear! Peace be with you!" Father Jasper and I wish you a blessed Easter and encourage you to view the Mass online or on television during Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Right now, we are hungering for the Eucharist which we often take for granted. Until we can safely gather again to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, we hunger and seek Him in Spiritual Communion. I leave you with this prayer from that same Eucharistic Congress, taken from the Confessions of St. Augustine, which was attended by then Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, now St. John Paul II.



*Father in heaven, you have made us for yourself, our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Fulfill this longing through Jesus the Bread of Life, so that we may witness to Him, who alone satisfies the hungers of the Human Family. By the power of your Spirit, lead us to the heavenly table where we may feast on the vision of your glory forever and ever. Amen.*

As a Church let us together help satisfy the hungers of the human family: Hunger for God, Hunger for Bread, Hunger for Freedom and Justice, Hunger for the Spirit, Hunger for Truth, Hunger for Understanding, Hunger for Peace, Hunger for Jesus, The Bread of Life.