

April 2, 2020

Dear Saint Augustine of Canterbury Parishioners,

I hope all of you are doing well during this time of staying at home because of the Corona virus. Bishop Braxton and the diocese have suspended all public Masses through Easter and until further notice. The governor has extended the stay-at-home order through April 30th so, I assume, our public Masses will be suspended through at least that date. Our First Communion, planned for Saturday, April 18th, has been postponed indefinitely and will be rescheduled once we resume public Masses. Confirmations in the Diocese of Belleville for the month of April have been cancelled; Confirmations in May, such as the Confirmation at Saints Peter and Paul, Waterloo, on Friday, May 8th, are still officially on the diocesan calendar.

With the help of Angi Kern and Carey Day, I did livestream a Mass from our church last Saturday evening. The video is still on the parish Facebook page and can be accessed through our parish webpage.

I plan to celebrate the Palm Sunday and Holy Week and Easter Masses, as well as the Good Friday service, and livestream them on the Saint Augustine of Canterbury Facebook page. Instructions have been received from the Vatican, via the Diocese of Belleville, simplifying these Masses somewhat, since they will be said without a congregation. For example, on Palm Sunday, palms will not be blessed and there will be no procession. On Holy Thursday, there will be no foot washing and no procession with the Blessed Sacrament at the end of Mass. For the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, there will be no fire outside, no procession with the Paschal (Easter) Candle, and no blessing of Holy Water.

I do plan on celebrating these Masses and services privately, in church, and livestreaming them on the parish Facebook page, as follows:

Saturday, April 4th, 5 PM: Palm Sunday Mass (will be available for viewing on Sunday morning, also)

Thursday, April 9th, 7 PM: Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper (church bells rung at the Gloria)

Friday, April 10th, 7 PM: Good Friday service with the Passion, Veneration of the Cross, and Communion

Saturday, April 11th, 8 PM: Holy Saturday night: Easter Vigil Mass with renewal of Baptismal promises (church bells rung at the Gloria)

Sunday, April 12th, 8:30 AM: Easter Sunday Mass with renewal of Baptismal promises

Bishop Braxton plans to celebrate the Triduum Masses and services (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night) at Saint Peter Cathedral in Belleville and livestream them. I am not sure at what internet site or page they will be available. I will try to pass that information along as I receive it. Also, the Saint Louis Cathedral as well as neighboring parishes are having livestreamed Masses; if you Google their webpages, you should

be to find their schedules and other information. EWTN is also a great source on cable and satellite.

We are blessed to have the online and television resources mentioned above. We are also blessed to have the time to spend alone and with our spouses and families to pray and read God's Word. As I mentioned in a previous letter, take some time to read the Bible. You might want to consider the First Letter of Saint Peter and the Gospel of Saint John. On Palm Sunday, the Passion reading will be from the Gospel of Saint Matthew, chapter 26, verse 14 through chapter 27, verse 66. On Good Friday, the Passion is from the Gospel of Saint John, chapter 18, verse 1 through chapter 19, verse 42. You might want to read these this week.

We Saint Augustine parishioners are called to be ever closer followers of Jesus Christ. This Lent, which we will never forget, is a time for us to pray for each other, for our parish, and for all of the people whom we know and who live in our area. Let us pray, also, that Jesus may show us how he wants us to reach out in material and spiritual service to all people, especially when this virus subsides.

Let us pray that we and our loved ones are not seriously affected by this virus and that the pandemic may end soon.

May God continue to bless all of you.

Sincerely,

Fr. Von Deeke