

13 March 2020

Dear Beloved Parishioners of Holy Trinity & Saint Stanislaus,

I am writing to you during these distressing times as the global community is combatting the spread of the Coronavirus. As you well know, many unprecedented steps have been taken even over the last 24 hours that demonstrates the seriousness of our current situation: all major sports leagues have cancelled or have otherwise suspended their seasons, hundreds of universities have closed, public and private schools have closed, governors across the nation have encouraged limited interpersonal contact and have banned large gatherings of people, and so forth. Our own governor, Tom Wolf, has asked Pennsylvanians to remain home as much as possible and to avoid public spaces like movie theaters, malls, and fitness facilities, and to conduct only necessary retail commerce.

It is truly extraordinary that some bishops throughout the country have canceled weekend liturgies. Also extraordinary is that the bishops of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have, together, dispensed the faithful from their obligation to attend weekend celebrations of the Eucharist until further notice. It is to this point that I write to you. Our parish communities must candidly recognize that we are largely a "vulnerable population" when it comes to contracting the Coronavirus, which the Center for Disease Control defines as those who are 60+ years old and/or have underlying health issues.

As your pastor, I *strongly encourage our vulnerable parishioners to avail yourselves to the Bishop's dispensation from your Sunday obligation* – it truly is, for you, a matter of life and death. To our younger parishioners: be aware that you can be an *asymptomatic* carrier of the Coronavirus for 14 days and can unknowingly pass the virus on to others without feeling ill yourself. I urge you to evaluate if you are at a higher risk of being a carrier and, if so, likewise refrain from attending Mass to avoid the potential of passing the virus to others, unaware. In this regard, I would consider those whose occupation requires frequent (especially physical contact) interaction with others: e.g., health care workers, teachers, retail employees, etc.

I consider myself to be part of that latter group, given my almost daily interaction with college students, yet am still under my priestly obligation to celebrate the liturgy. Consequently, on my part, I will sanitize my hands both before and after distributing communion. I will also be closely monitoring my own health and my potential exposure to the Coronavirus.

Fr. Dan and I will develop a contingency plan for our communities in the event that either of us become ill. This will likely involve a temporary alteration of our parish's weekend mass schedule. Please follow our parish's website for any urgent announcements in this regard.

Let us continue to support and pray for one another and may Christ, the Divine Physician, guide our leaders and the medical community down the path of effective containment of the pandemic and an eradication of the Coronavirus.

Respectfully,

Fr. Jason A. Glover, S.T.L.
Pastor