

SAINT PETER CHURCH • CONNEAUTVILLE
SAINT PHILIP CHURCH • LINESVILLE

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March 17, 2020
Feast of St. Patrick

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I'm sure that all of you are aware of the recent national health alerts and recommendations for preventing the spread of the highly contagious COVID-19 virus strain that has had a worldwide impact. In response to the seriousness of the situation and the need for social distancing Bishop Lawrence Persico has dispensed all Catholics from the obligation to attend Sunday and Saturday Vigil Masses throughout the Erie Diocese.

In our own parishes, we are taking this threat seriously and have decided to cancel the remainder of our Fish FryDays at St. Philip and the Chicken Biscuit Dinner at St. Peter. Once this dangerous period subsides, we will have plenty of opportunities to gather again for worship, fellowship, and food. In the meantime, we must act responsibly and take every precaution to protect ourselves, our families and one another.

Like most of you, our parishes operate on a shoestring budget. These fundraisers are one way in which we help to supplement our income. However, with this interruption, we are going to experience a shortfall. In addition, given the Bishop's dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass, our numbers are down considerably, and justifiably so. But I want to emphasize that you are not obligated to attend Mass at this time and if you are feeling sick or your health is compromised in any way, you need to stay home.

Nevertheless, the bills keep rolling in and our daily expenses continue during this difficult time. For this reason, I ask that you prayerfully consider a couple of options to help increase or maintain your level of giving and responsible stewardship for the benefit of our parish families.

I encourage you to consider online giving as a safe and effective means to ensure that we have a predictable offertory income each week. This would help us tremendously. If you desire to set this up, please contact the parish office and we can assist you. You don't even need a personal computer to do this. This process of giving has been met with great success in many parishes throughout the diocese and helps to maintain a stable financial environment as we move into the future.

Another option is for you to mail your offertory to the parish office each week, especially during this time when you might not be attending Mass on a regular schedule.

As your shepherd, I am grateful for everything you do for our parishes and trust that you will continue to support our faith communities, as best you are able.

Let our lives always reflect the faith we have in God. Fear nothing and pray about everything. Be strong and trust in God always. Be assured of my prayers for you and your loved ones.

Sincerely,

Fr. Chris M. Hamlett
Pastor