

March 23, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Well, another week has begun and immediately we are faced with more changes- this time issued by the Governor's Office.

In light of the rapid spread of the COVID-19 Virus, the Governor has, under executive order, required all Michigan residents and most businesses to stay home. This order will last until April 13 (Easter Monday) and punishable by a misdemeanor. Even now this date seems somewhat conditional on stemming the tide of COVID-19.

Of course, we will take note of this executive order and remind you all that we cannot defeat this virus unless all of us play our part. As a people of faith, it is the responsibility of all of us to care for those who are less fortunate and to behave in a way that protects and enhances the common good.

*So here is how I see it affecting our parish community:*

#### ***PARISH OFFICE***

- ***Our Parish Office will be closed until April 13.*** Please note that unless otherwise indicated all parish meetings are cancelled or postponed.
- The emergency line with access to the priests remains in place (734-821-2100).
- Communications with individual ministries should continue in the usual manner- these will be monitored remotely and we will try to respond as soon as practicable.
- If you have documents that need attending to-please drop them off at the Parish Office mailbox or forward them by mail/email to us.
- We will continue to publish a modified online version of our Parish Bulletin (Unfortunately, printed copies are not available). This can be accessed through our parish website.

#### ***MASSES and LITURGIES***

- We will continue to live stream our regular weekday and our weekend Masses-5pm Saturday Vigil, 7pm Spanish Mass and Sunday 10:30am. ***Please see the bulletin or our website for further details and for the times for online Holy Week and Easter liturgies.***
- The Church will continue to be open on weekdays for public prayer daily from 10am to 2pm. Special times apply to weekends again visit us online.

#### ***WORDS of GRATITUDE-***

May I also take this opportunity to thank all of you who have sent emails, notes and cards with prayers and good wishes to me and our Pastoral Team during this

time of crisis! You cannot imagine how important and encouraging they have been to all of us- THANK YOU!

***SOLEMITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION***

Finally, on Wednesday the Church celebrates the Annunciation of the Lord. Having recently been to Nazareth and prayed at the spot where this event took place (*picture here*) - I am filled with great hope and an ever deeper gratitude for the mystery of our salvation in Christ. Indeed, just standing at that spot where tradition tells us Mary encountered the Angel Gabriel, I know in a new way both the gift and sanctity of all human life. There, as recalled in Luke's Gospel, the very mystery of the Incarnation began when Jesus took flesh in Mary's womb- hence the Church's great reverence for and defense of all human life from the very first moment of conception to natural death.



As we continue to struggle with the impact of COVID-19, I want to ensure you that we at St. Francis are doing all we can to maintain and strengthen the bond of community and faith that join us together. We are also trying to do all that can to maintain our outreach and care of those in need in our midst. Again, I would ask you to visit our parish website to see how you can help with this ongoing ministry. Together, let us continue to pray for healing for all affected, for our emergency and medical services who serve us and for our community, nation and world.

Remember we are a people of light and we will get through this- so stay strong and safe!

Blessings to you all

*Fr. James*