

March 16, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Saint Petronille,

Latest Update

Thank you to all of you for your patience, understanding and prayer as we try to implement policy to stem the Covid-19 outbreak. The fear of an unknown danger carries with it all types of anxiety, anger, sadness and grief. As we comply with the government directives regarding the outbreak, we also want to keep up our faith, hope and love.

As you know, approaches and guidelines to deal with the Covid-19 outbreak change regularly and sometimes daily. Saint Petronille has tried to be proactive given the information we have at any particular moment. We, once again, thank you for your patience, understanding and compliance. I have included a copy of Bishop Pates' most recent letter. Since there are a number of organizations providing guidelines which sometimes differ. In order to maintain consistency, the Diocese of Joliet will be following the guidelines issued by Governor Pritzker.

Saint Petronille church will remain open for prayer during regular hours: 6 am to 3 pm – Monday through Friday and 7 am to 6 pm – Saturdays and 6:30 am to 6 pm on Sundays. We have been sanitizing it regularly. Although Mass will be offered daily for the welfare of our community, all those suffering from the outbreak and the intention indicated in the bulletin, we recommend that parishioners abstain from attending until further notice. Eventually, we will have the ability to simulcast these Masses. Parishioners of Saint Petronille are dispensed from their Sunday obligation this coming Sunday and our Masses will once again be suspended. If you are able to continue to support your parish financially, we would greatly appreciate it.

Since the parish values the input of her leadership boards especially during this crucial time, we will be conducting our Parish Council, School Board and Finance Council meetings via teleconferencing.

We will soon have the ability to send video messages to our parishioners. Further, we hope to have our capacity to live stream the Masses being offered up and running this weekend...no later than the following weekend. Watch our webpage, Facebook page and email updates for information about this media outreach.

A Story

When things look bad, I remember my mother sitting with me on my bed talking things through and telling me a story. Since this is not the first time that the human race has been through such difficulty, I thought I should probably include in my letters accounts of the saints dealing with similar situations throughout history. Here is one:

Saint Camillus de Lellis

Saint Camillus lived in Italy from 1550 to 1614. He was a strong willed and angry child whose saintly mother was at a loss to control him, because his father was a professional soldier and was often away from home. Camillus would eventually follow in his father's footsteps fighting in the Venetian army until his leg was injured in battle. Camillus came home and began work as a laborer at a Capuchin friary (a type of Franciscan) in Manfredonia. Befriended by one of the friars who looked beyond his aggressive

nature, Camillus had a conversion of heart and sought to enter the friary; however, he was rejected because of his leg injury which had still not healed.

What does this have to do with what is going on today?

Camillus did not give up. He moved to Rome to get treatment for his leg at Saint Giacomo (James) Hospital where he was befriended by Saint Phillip Neri, a personal friend of the Pope and the funniest saint in history. Instead of being cured of his ailment, Camillus started caring for the sick in the hospital himself. At Saint Phillip's urging Camillus would found a religious order called the Camillians whose mission it was to care for the sick, wounded (They cared for wounded soldiers.) and dying. When the Bubonic Plague hit Rome the Camillians cared for the sick and dying in Rome at a time before anyone had seen a germ under a microscope. They cared for people's medical needs but, most importantly, they did everything with prayer and for the Lord. In fact, Saint Camillus performed so many supernatural healings this time and the Camillians medical care so effective that he was credited with ridding Rome of the plague and was referred to as "the Saint of Rome." This is how an angry, impetuous soldier became the self-less, life-saving, "Saint of Rome."

Let's do our due diligence in avoiding this virus, but let us also keep up our faith, hope and love. Remember we are not alone in all this. Our Lord will never distance Himself from us so let us never forget Him.

Let us keep one another in prayer and may Almighty God bless you and keep you.

In Christ,

Fr. Thomas Milota