

March 19, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Saint Petronille,

Risibility

Walmart typically bustles with activity. Children pulling toys off of shelves, testing their noise making abilities. Customers questioning employees about the features on that TV or the proper oil to use for their car. A couple of college guys joking about the party they will attend later that night and which “soda-pop” they will bring. A mother holding up a pair of pants asking her little son to stand still.

Nope.

None of that...plenty of people stalked the corridors at the Walmart. Silence reigned...no one spoke and everyone’s face bore, not a worried, not an anxious look...just a blank stare like zombies...no sound.

This would seem not to be a time to smile.

The word “Risible” is equivocal. It can refer to someone who is able to laugh and it can also refer to a person, thing or event that is funny. Aristotle wrote that “Man is the only animal that laughs” and “Laughter is a bodily exercise, precious to health.” Charles Dickens wrote: “There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor.” Obviously, laughter can be used to wound another or reflect insensitivity to another’s plight; however, laughter in the happy medium between being boorish and hurtful recognizes the incongruity in a situation or event. For some reason, this can sooth the soul. Even in the midst of this horrible situation, laughter...even another’s laughter...can help.

Many saints had a wonderful and sometimes odd sense of humor. As Saint Lawrence lay being martyred on a grill, tradition holds that he turned to the Roman soldiers and told them to turn him over because he was done on that side. Saint Phillip Neri was known as the “laughing saint.” He would keep a book full of jokes on his desk so that he could use them when a dignitary would arrive; however, the core of his humor was his humility and the purpose of his humor to teach. For example, he would be known to go to meetings or gathering with half his hair shaved off or half his beard. We make humor most safely when we make fun of ourselves for the good of others...this is what Saint Lawrence did to strengthen the Christians who were looking on as he gave his life for them. Let us keep up our faith, hope and love...and our humanity.

No Public Liturgical Events

At the direction of Bishop Pates and beginning immediately, there will no longer be any public liturgical events in the Diocese of Joliet and so, none at Saint Petronille. No Masses (weekday or Sunday) and no stations. We are permitted to hear confessions individually and we will continue to do sick calls especially in the case in which a person is dying. Please notice that the

priests will continue to offer Mass for the indicated intentions and for all of you during this dangerous and frightening time, but these Masses will be offered privately. The church building will remain open during its regular hours with the exception of 5 pm on Saturday and 9:30 am on Sunday when the church will be closed and locked.

LiveStreaming Mass

We will live stream mass from Saint Petronille at 5:00 pm Saturday and 9:30 am on Sunday on our new YouTube Channel. We will be sending the link in a future email. Please notice that this Mass will be offered in church but the church will be closed at these times in that no one is permitted to be in attendance except those involved in the liturgy.

Saint Joseph

Today is the Solemnity of Saint Joseph. I am not sure why Saint Joseph gets a Solemnity and Saint Patrick an option memorial, but I think it has something to do with his wife and adopted Son. The Solemnity today, in fact, is the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary. This celebration emphasizes the devotion and love Saint Joseph showed for his wife, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and her Son. The way he sacrificed himself to protect them and keep them safe. Hence, we pray for fathers in a special way today especially during this difficult time.

Spiritual Communion

In one of my previous letters, I suggested that you reach the scriptures of the day, offer an Our Father and make spiritual communion, but I did not explain what that was. The Most Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. We not only remember the Sacrifice of our Lord on the cross and His Resurrection from the dead, but our Lord's body, blood, soul and divinity are made present and received each time we receive communion. There are times, like now, when we are not able to receive communion physically; however, there has been a practice throughout the ages of making a spiritual communion in which you may receive the Grace of the Sacrament when you desire deeply and ask for his Grace.

St. Teresa of Avila wrote: "When you do not receive Communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual Communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you."

Saint Maximillian Kolbe, when he was deprived of celebrating Mass or even of seeing the Most Holy Eucharist while captive at Auschwitz concentration camp, would imagine himself before the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel where he had prayed when he was free and he took great consolation in the presence of our Lord.

Prayer of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,

I believe that You

are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Ministry to Refugees

The St. Petronille Christian Service Office in combination with fellow parishioners have created a way for our parish family to work together to support each other during these difficult times. We know that there are families currently struggling to provide their loved ones with basic needs due to the shuttering of businesses and schools so we have created a Sign Up Genius to try and help alleviate some of the more emergent needs for these families. My favorite quote is from St. Teresa of Calcutta as she once said, "if you want to change the world go home and love your family", what better way to show out love for our St. Petronille family than by lifting them up now. The process is easy, follow the link to the Sign Up Genius, look through the list of needed items (many will be things you may already have in your homes so the need to go out to a store should be minimal), sign up for the things which you may be willing to donate, and bring them to the Narthex of the church during the hours it is open. There is a collection basket in the Narthex where you may deposit your donation; if you choose to donate a gift card, please drop those in the outside mailbox near the doors of the parish office. As goods are collected, we will be putting together bags and arranging for pick up. Please check back to the SUG weekly as it will continuously be updated as time goes along, and more needs are identified. If you or someone you know is in need of something as well please do not hesitate to contact Tanya Singh in the parish office at singt@stpetschurch.org. We are in this together and we have a hand ready if you need help up, just reach out! Thank you for supporting this collection and each other!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040944A9AE2BA7F94-stpetronille>

You are all in my thoughts and prayers and Masses.

May Almighty God bless you and keep you.

In Christ,

Fr. Thomas Milota