

March 16, 2020

Dear members of the St. Mary's Parish Family;

I am writing to let you know that the Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop David Edwards, has directed that all gatherings for public worship be suspended until at least Palm Sunday in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**As a result, all services at St. Mary's are cancelled effective immediately.**

This represents a significant loss in our Parish life as we will have to forego for a while our time together as the Body of Christ; but it is critically important that we use this time of social distancing as well as we can.

During this time, I ask for your prayers for the whole Parish Family, for their health and safety.

I also ask for your prayers for all those, both in our community and around the world, who are particularly vulnerable to the virus - the elderly and those with other health concerns; and for those whose lives will be severely compromised by the economic consequences of these disruptions.

And I ask for your prayers for all those who are working in our hospitals and public health services, who are putting themselves in harm's way to prepare for and care for the sick.

I also ask for your prayers for our leaders, political and spiritual, as they seek to help us through this challenge.

Finally, I ask you to pray for calm throughout these days. As I mentioned in the bulletin on Sunday, there is no place for fear in Christ; and the Church has a particular witness at a time of public anxiety to respond with prudence, patience, and peace. We all need to be responsible not just to our own concerns but to each others' needs. So the sacrifices that we make individually and as a church to minimize the chance of infection by reducing social contact to essential matters and practising good health hygiene will help protect not just ourselves but others.

I also ask for your help in identifying how we, as a Parish Family, might care for those who will struggle to care for themselves. We are reminded in Holy Scripture that to wish the well-being of others without doing what lies in our power to help them is empty and vain. Please let me know what we can be doing as a Parish to love and care for our neighbours.

Please be in touch with me at any time if I can be of assistance. God is good and his love is infinite. I rest every day knowing that his grace is sufficient.

In Christ,  
Fr. Kevin