



strengthening our faith

by rebuilding our heritage

April 24, 2020

My dear friends,

It is hard to believe that it has been a month since public Masses were suspended here in the Archdiocese of Washington. We were in the midst of Lent, a time of penance, a time to grow in our relationship with Jesus. And suddenly everything stopped. What happened? What should we do?

For me, the questions became: Who are we? What are we called to do? Well, we are the Church. We may be in lockdown but we can continue to promote and live the mission of the Cathedral. We must continue to worship, to serve, and to teach. We have a wonderful staff who have been able—with your support and with God's grace—to fulfill our mission in spite of unprecedented circumstances.

Worship. Thousands were able to participate in the Masses and liturgies of Holy Week at the Cathedral via live stream. It was a Holy Week and Easter unlike anything we ever could have imagined. But we were never more a community. Thanks to the wonders of technology, the beauty of Holy Week came alive in our homes. Not ideal, but God works in mysterious ways—ways that we will only gradually come to understand. When all is said and done, we will have deepened our hunger for the Eucharist and grown in gratitude for our community of faith.

In the weeks leading up to Holy Week, Fr. John, Fr. Jack and I shared reflections on the Mass readings (in English and Spanish) and the lives of saints. Tom Stehle has continued the [Choral Highlights](#) website feature, inspiring us with samples of some of the music we would normally hear at Mass, and descriptions of how it relates to the Mass prayers and readings. We are happy to announce that St. Matthew's will livestream Sunday Mass in English on the [Cathedral's Facebook page](#) this Sunday, April 26 at 11:30am. I will celebrate the Mass and Fr. John and Fr. Jack will concelebrate. Stay tuned for announcement of the livestreaming of Mass in Spanish.

On our website you also can find links to [daily and Sunday livestream Masses and prayer resources](#).

Service. Thanks to your support, the Cathedral's outreach to the poor continues. While we were not able to continue our full-scale weekly breakfast and Scripture ministry to the homeless, dozens of volunteers since mid-March have contributed to our Monday morning sidewalk ministry. Many donate bagged lunches and others distribute them in front of the Cathedral. [Contact Norma Canedo](#) to participate. Norma also continues to receive calls for rental assistance or for food for the elderly and homebound, and is always ready and willing to help meet the need. Fatima Aybar is reaching out to our Spanish-speaking community to help with any special needs.



Teaching. One of the hardest things to accept this Easter was that our wonderful group of people preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil would have to wait. Thankfully they have continued their preparation via conference call with Theresa Prymuszewski. Please continue to pray for them. We will keep you posted on when the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist will be celebrated with them. I know we will all make it a day to remember!

Several faith formation opportunities are available. These include two groups doing the [Little Rock study of the Gospel of Matthew](#) via conference call (you may still join a group), an [online study](#)

[series on *Laudato Si'*](#) via Zoom hosted by our Creation Care team (you may still join), meetings of our catechists with Theresa Prymuszewski by conference call, the Sunday evening [Young Adult Coffeehouse](#) via Zoom, and the Oracion por teléfono – prayer groups by conference call for our Spanish-speaking parishioners at 3pm and 9pm each day ([contact Fatima Aybar](#)).

Finances. Some have asked how the Cathedral is weathering the shutdown financially. Pam Erwin, our Business Manager, and I meet regularly to monitor the situation. Since we have no visitors, this portion of our Sunday offertory gifts has disappeared. Some parishioners continue to send checks or envelopes by mail. Thanks to the generosity of those who continue to give by mail or through FaithDirect, or who have stepped up to make special donations, our losses over the last six weeks are not as great as in some parishes. While public Masses are suspended, I ask that you please continue to make an offertory gift to support our parish. Enrolling in [FaithDirect](#) is the best way to help, as sustained giving is the key to our survival as a parish.

Keeping our remaining staff and bringing back our furloughed staff is a top priority. For this reason, we are participating in the federal Paycheck Protection Program to bridge the gap financially until our regular ministries and Masses resume. So, in spite of this difficult moment and the long road ahead, I am mindful of how much we have to be grateful for. I am most grateful to you, for your great spirit and your generosity. Yes, money is down. Yes, some large unpaid bills remain. Yes, we are trying to put together a 2020 – 2021 budget. But Jesus said, *fear not*. Have faith. Hope in the Lord.

I also want to say to those who have been laid off or furloughed from your jobs, as well as business owners—especially small businesses—that I can only begin to imagine the depth of your concern and anxiety at this time. My prayers are with you in a special way, and I know that your fellow parishioners hold you in prayer as well.

Outreach and prayers. A team of parishioners and staff is working its way through the parish directory (2450 households), making phone calls to check in on all our parishioners. I am especially eager to reach people who are not able to receive our [email communications](#). Those without internet access are experiencing the greatest distance from the community. In making these calls, we are discovering some inaccurate phone numbers. If you would like to receive a call and have not been contacted by the first week of May, please call the parish office at 202-347-3215 and give us the best number to reach you, and someone will be in touch.

Thank you to all who responded to the request for prayers for parishioner Ed Dalere. Ed, a long-time usher at the 5:30pm Sunday Mass, passed away peacefully last Saturday evening. May he rest in peace.

If you would like the parish to pray for a parishioner who is ill and you have permission to share this information, please [email your request to me](#).

My friends, I want to assure you of my continued prayers, and those of Fr. John, and Fr. Jack, for each of you. God will bring us through these difficult days, and my prayer is that we will be an even stronger community of faith when we are back together in our beloved Cathedral.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector