



*strengthening our faith* **CATHEDRAL OF ST. MATTHEW THE APOSTLE** *by rebuilding our heritage*

March 14, 2020

My dear parishioners and friends,

Pope Francis has written a prayer to Mary amid the coronavirus pandemic, which I share with you below. As always, Mary points the way to her son, who has revealed himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.



"O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm.

You, Salvation of Your People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen."

(Adapted from Vatican News, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-03/pope-francis-prayer-our-lady-protection-coronavirus.html>)

### ***To Jesus through Mary - Staying Close to Our Lord***

On Friday, March 13, I announced the suspension of public liturgies at the Cathedral - Masses, Confessions (including Wednesday evening Confessions), and Lenten Stations of the Cross - until further notice, citing Archbishop Gregory's March 12, 2020 statement (<https://adw.org/news/archdiocese-of-washington-announcement-regarding-coronavirus/>) for the Archdiocese of Washington. I also let you know that Archbishop Gregory had issued a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass during this time to all parishioners of the Archdiocese of Washington. Finally, I announced that all events, classes, and group meetings at St. Matthew's are cancelled until after Easter.

The Archdiocese in a letter issued Friday afternoon, March 13, wrote that Archbishop Gregory's decision to cancel Masses was not an easy one, and continued:

"Our hope is that this restriction of the public celebration of the Mass will be for a very limited period. For the time being, it is necessary to keep in mind the common good of public health and the importance of doing our part in preventing the spread of the coronavirus by avoiding large gatherings."

As members of the Body of Christ, being in community and praying and worshipping in communion are part of our identity. The social distancing that is necessary in this pandemic will be difficult. Even more difficult will be going without the Eucharist.

When we are unable to receive the Eucharist, we can make a spiritual communion animated by our desire to receive and embrace Jesus in our hearts. The flier included with this letter provides guidance and prayers for making a spiritual communion.

### ***Spiritual Resources and Guidance***

- The Archdiocesan website has a page with informational resources on coronavirus: <https://adw.org/coronavirus/>.

- The Archdiocesan website has resources on how to receive spiritual communion: <https://adw.org/coronavirus-dispensation-and-prayers/>.
- Take time to read and reflect upon the readings from Sunday Mass. You can find the readings at [usccb.org](http://usccb.org) and a Sunday Gospel reflection on the Archdiocesan YouTube channel.
- The Archdiocesan website has audio and written Stations of the Cross: <https://adw.org/coronavirus-dispensation-and-prayers/>.
- The Archdiocesan Sunday TV Mass is available online: <https://adw.org/parishes-masses/sunday-tv-mass/>.
- Here is the prayer by Pope Francis to Mary, reproduced above: <https://adw.org/text-of-popes-prayer-to-mary-during-coronavirus-pandemic/>.
- Pastoral care to the sick will continue, incorporating protocols recommended by health professionals. Contact a priest at the rectory office (see below).

The Archdiocese will continue to make additional spiritual and informational resources available and provide regular updates on the ADW website. Archbishop Gregory affirms his prayers and love for you.

### ***Rectory Office - Call to Make an Appointment***

As I wrote yesterday, you and your loved ones remain in my prayers. If you need anything you can call the rectory at 202-347-3215. We ask that you please exercise prevailing public health recommendations and precautions, including social distancing, remaining at home if you are sick or suspect that you are sick, and self-quarantining if warranted.

You may make an appointment for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please don't hesitate to call or email me ([rjameson@stmatthewscathedral.org](mailto:rjameson@stmatthewscathedral.org)) or Fr. John Benson ([jbenson@stmatthewscathedral.org](mailto:jbenson@stmatthewscathedral.org)).

May the peace of Christ be with you and remain with you always, come what may.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson  
Rector

Enclosure