



May 8, 2020

My dear friends,

Last Saturday I thought I would go out for a walk to try to see the flyover of the Blue Angels and the Thunderbirds. Maybe that would help to get my mind off the lockdown. As I wandered around the neighborhood, I began to wonder. Mostly about you.

I wonder how you are dealing with the extraordinary situation we find ourselves in. I wonder about you senior parishioners (I know – I'm in your number!); I wonder especially about those of you who live alone and have no family nearby. My call team and I have been able to connect with many of you by phone, but in other cases it's been frustrating to find that the phone number on file is no longer good (do drop us a note if you've gotten a new home or cell phone number in the last few years!) And so I do wonder about you and I pray that you are doing okay, staying safe, getting what you need.



I wonder about all working from home. For some households it probably works pretty well; for others, especially those with children, it may be more challenging. Kids out of boredom climbing the walls and acting out as kids do can hardly make for a productive work environment! Even so, we all know that the time spent together as a family is a blessing that you'll remember with gratitude.

I wonder about you whose work is essential and who still head off to work each day. Some are nurses, doctors, medical techs or hospital support staff; some are in law enforcement (like my nephew) or are first responders of one sort or another. Some are checkers at the Giant or Safeway, or you staff the neighborhood CVS, or drive a metro bus – and I know that doesn't begin to exhaust the possibilities. Many of you put yourselves in harm's way each day and I want to acknowledge the selflessness and the heroism that requires. Each day at Mass I pray for you in a special way, asking God to keep you healthy and safe and to give you the physical and emotional strength to deal with the situations in which you find yourselves.

I wonder – and I worry – about all of you who have been laid off or furloughed. I can only begin to imagine how scary this is. And to those who own small businesses – or big businesses – I wonder how you are dealing with this awful moment. Many have had no choice but to lay off employees, some who may be like family. It must be heart wrenching.

I wonder, too, how those who have lost loved ones are handling the loss. Death is always exceedingly painful, but if you have not been able to be with a dying loved one or have been unable to receive the grace-filled consolation of the Church by celebrating a funeral, the pain must be unbearable. My heart goes out to you.

And then I wonder about all the young adults working with Fr. John or me to prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. I know how hard it has been to accept rescheduling your weddings to 2021. And I really miss being with you for your marriage prep sessions. I have tried to keep timeslots down the road for you – I prefer in-person sessions rather than Zoom! I can't wait to see you. And I can't help but wonder about all of you who are preparing for the baptism of your child or celebrating your

child's First Holy Communion or Confirmation. And of course, I think of those of you who were hoping to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil! God bless you. You are continuing to grow in your relationship with Jesus and with others in your group of Elect and Candidates. This much I can tell you: when we do get to celebrate these great moments, it will be a very happy day!



You may be wondering a bit about me and what I'm up to these days. We priests are all well and getting to know each other a lot better. We are together for meals (we thank God for a couple of angels who have been preparing some meals for us) and enjoy good conversation (Fr. John shared this photo of Fr. Martino pitching in at dinner!). We all look forward to spring weather. A good deal of my prayer time centers on you as I ask God to use these strange days to strengthen your faith, deepen your love for your family, prompt you to reach out to the lonely, and to give you the patience to deal with one another in your families and work environments.

And then there are the many emails and text messages! It's been great to hear from many former parishioners of St. Matthew's or previous parishes – some from many years back! I also am regularly on conference calls and Zoom meetings with staff members, our Parish Council, diocesan colleagues, and other groups. To tell you the truth, I had not even heard of Zoom until the coronavirus crisis, but it has become a household word and a near necessity.

Part of each day I devote to working on homilies or letters like this, or to preparing for the live streaming of the Sunday Mass. As time goes on, I find myself getting less and less spooked when I look into a camera; I guess that's a good thing.

Before closing, I want to invite you join us on Thursday, May 14 for a special Holy Hour at 3pm, with Eucharistic adoration, a bilingual rosary, and benediction that will be livestreamed from Our Lady's Chapel on our YouTube channel. Pope Francis, together with Muslim leaders, has called for that day to be one of prayer, fasting and charitable works to overcome the coronavirus pandemic. You can even join the livestream from a smartphone! Let's come together as a parish community in adoration and prayer for this global intention, as well as honoring the day with our personal prayer, fasting and acts of charity within our homes and families.



So there you have it, my friends; my wonderings and maybe a few of yours, as well. It's been good engaging in this little 'conversation' with you, but, of course it doesn't hold a candle to being with you in person. With you, I long for the day when we will again be able to gather in our beautiful Cathedral to celebrate Mass together and to experience in ways other than virtual what it means to be a community of faith, what it means to be the Body of Christ. In the meantime, let's stand in quiet wonder at all the ways God gives us to stay connected and to strengthen the bonds of love that make us the strong community of faith we are!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson  
Rector