

April 8, 2020

Wednesday Update #4

Dear Fellow Parishioners:

Here is our fourth Wednesday update from the St. Helen office to keep our parish family informed as we continue this time of separation for so many families, friends and even from our places of worship. Perhaps we remember that the Israelites were not allowed to enter the holiest place in the temple but only the High Priest. Yet until now we had virtually no restrictions on sitting in the Church where Jesus, the Son of God, was present. Unlike many around the world we had the opportunity to celebrate the sacredness of the Mass daily and most joyfully on Sunday. Perhaps there is some way each of us, in the future, will more fully participate in the mass, i.e. keeping our hour of fast, how we dress, getting to church well ahead of the mass time, staying until the end of mass, responding to the need at the masses for greeters, ushers, lectors, ministers of the Eucharist.

We are in the second week of the Stay at Home Order and, most importantly Holy Week. Here is what we are doing:

1. We are maintaining staff in the office to personally answer phone calls during the normal office hours, 9am-4pm. We are restricting entrance into the building but are willing to address the needs of the parish through many other ways. Dena continues to be at the front desk and is doing a great job responding to parishioners' questions and needs.
2. Outreach Services are being offered at the United Against Poverty location and at our own location on 18 street. Food distribution is only being offered on Wednesdays at present but all other needs are being handled by staff through email and the phone. There is a notable need for funds for rent, utilities and food. We are considering a day for parishioners to drop off food donations after a little more time has passed. Perhaps next week.
3. Our priests continue to remember the parish in the private masses being said on weekdays. Arrangements have been made for all to view the Holy Week services. Detailed information is on the web site. Confessions are being heard by appointment.
4. Under the direction of Laura Lewis, we thank all of those who have assisted with the presentations on Facebook and our web site. We will maintain a means of not only keeping you updated but also connected. Your comments, questions and suggestions are very helpful in knowing what is most meaningful. Please continue.
5. Not unlike your family, the parish is also leaning how to operate in this pandemic. Other than manning the office, all other staff are either working from home or in the case of our Maintenance Staff working on a limited, rotating basis. We are committed to maintain our regular staff at present. As many of the parishes in our Diocese, we have applied for the SBA loan/grant which can be used to cover salaries and utilities. We are fortunate to have some savings to rely on and grateful that the weekly Offertory continues to improve.

The office phone is 772-567-5129. If you have a need, question, or concern, please call us. This is your parish and we are all here to serve God by serving one another. As you recall we celebrated last year the 100th Anniversary of St. Helen. No doubt the trials and difficulties during those 100 years, from starting the parish, to paying to build all the buildings, to facing wars and economic hardships, all contributed to the holiness of this parish. Let us be encouraged at how God will strengthen us through this trial and use this wonderful parish for His glory in the future.

Please join me daily in the Memorare Prayer:

REMEMBER, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee do I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Your Brother in Christ,

Deacon dave