



March 22, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of the Cathedral of Saint Peter,
Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception, and Saint Patrick,

These are difficult days in which we find ourselves. In quick succession, what was just an item on the evening news has come to dominate our airwaves and conversations and change our daily lives. Sadly, the coronavirus has even had an impact on our parish life as our churches are now closed and we cannot gather together. This will be a penance, a penance that few would have chosen and Holy Mother Church would not have imposed apart from these extraordinary circumstances, but it is a penance all the same. It can, therefore, be offered to God like any other penance or mortification.

I have loved these past seven weeks being your pastor and getting to know you and our parish communities. It is such an odd experience to walk into our churches and be the only one inside. Please know of my spiritual closeness to you and that I have been keeping you in my daily prayers.

These past few days have been a bit of a whirlwind: my diocesan responsibilities continue unabated (even increased in trying to help all our pastors and parishes stay on top of their response to the pandemic), and I am having to develop new skillsets on the fly (like YouTube live-streaming). This has left me little time to reach out to you, but I hope it will allow us to be in closer contact as we forge ahead.

Mass

Saint Padre Pio said that “it would be easier for the world to survive without the Sun than to do without Holy Mass.” Even though the faithful cannot be present, be assured that Father McVoy and I—and all priests—are offering Holy Mass daily where we remember all of you at the altar, pray for the Mass intentions of the day, and beg God to unite us all in a spiritual communion in this time of physical separation. The Mass goes on.

- **My Private Mass**—I will be celebrating Mass every weekday morning at 8:00 a.m. On Sundays, I will offer Mass in the extraordinary form at 10:30 a.m. *Please pray with me at those times*, whether or not you can access the live streaming below.
- **Spiritual Communion**—Though unable to receive sacramental Communion, during this time (and always!), we are able to receive the Lord spiritually. Saint Thomas Aquinas defined a spiritual communion as “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the most blessed sacrament in Communion at Mass and lovingly embracing him as if we had actually received him.” In this prayer we ask that the Lord would come to us and make his dwelling in our hearts as grace. Rest assured that he can and does respond to anyone who comes to him in love and humility.

- Here is the Act of Spiritual Communion that I use and offer for your use, written by Saint Alphonsus Liguori: *My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.*
- **Subscribe to our YouTube Channel**—PLEASE subscribe to our YouTube channel; this is where all my Masses will be posted. The more subscribers we have, the more options open up in posting. Please help us to do this: Visit [Downtown Catholic YouTube Channel](#). To subscribe, click the red subscribe button at the top-right of the page. This may require you to sign-into or create a YouTube account. Once subscribed, click the bell icon to receive notifications. This means that you will be alerted every time a new video is posted.
- I will “go live” for each Mass I celebrate. I am alternating between ordinary and extraordinary forms. On the days I celebrate a Latin Mass, I will try to line up another priest to say Mass in English; this, too, will be posted on the channel.
- I will also try to livestream other spiritual opportunities (Adoration, Liturgy of the Hours, Rosary, Stations of the Cross) throughout the week, probably in the afternoon.

Stay Connected to Our Parishes

One of my goals for my first year as rector–pastor was to look at how we can improve parish communications, and this time has brought that to the fore! We will continue to utilize our current means of communicating and debut a new way for the churches to stay in contact with all parishioners.

- **On the web**—Please visit our churches’ websites: www.cathedralofstpeter.com and www.smsp-wilmington.com. Up-to-date information and resources will be posted there as they are available.
- Including the **Bulletin**—Our bulletin will continue to be available each week on the churches’ websites.
- **Flock Note**—I am very excited about this opportunity. This free communication system will allow me to communicate with all parishioners from one platform. In time, with some more setup, we will be able to create sub-groups by church, by particular ministry, by interest group, etc. Please visit DowntownCatholic.FlockNote.com to be added to this communication. This will be how I send out future letters and shorter messages. You are able to receive these as emails or as texts. We have been using this at the diocesan level to communicate with the priests and parishes for the past several months, and it has worked out so well. I am looking forward to being able to use it in our churches, too!

Financial Support of Our Churches

If you find yourself in a difficult financial situation because of coronavirus (or really any reason), then disregard this.

The life- and soul-saving mission of our churches continues in the midst of this pandemic. Although we are streamlining our operations to save scarce resources, we need your help to have them emerge from this shutdown with real strength. Our churches have expenses through this time, not least of which (in importance or cost) is employee salaries and benefits. We are committed to providing for our hard-working staffs, so if you are able to continue your

contributions while away from Mass, please do so. I am asking you, if at all possible, to continue (and even increase) your faithful support in the following ways:

- **Bank Bill Pay Services**—Your bank can help you stay up-to-date with your offertory. All banks offer an automatic giving feature through their on-line platform. It's as simple as identifying the church as a vendor/company, including the address & telephone number (listed below), within the bill pay section of the banking site. Then set up automatic payments (look for an auto pay link):
 - Select amount
 - Select delivery date (e.g. Sunday or 1st of the month)
 - Select frequency (weekly)
 - Select duration (continual until stopped)
 - Email when payment has been sent
 - This feature directs your bank to mail a check directly to the parish. There are no fees for you or the parish. It saves paper and eliminates postage, and automatically follows your instructions until those instructions are changed.
- **Mail in Sunday and Second Collection Envelopes**—For those of you who would prefer to not automate your offering, I am asking that you consider mailing in your offertory gifts and tithes to the parish—checks only; please do not mail cash. Our churches' addresses are listed below.
- **Bring Your Offering to the Rectory**—I will regularly be stopping in the offices during this time to pick up mail. Feel free to use the mail slots on the doors to the parishes' offices for your offertory—or any parish mail or business.

So many of you have already reached out to inquire how to continue supporting our churches; THANK YOU for your generosity and your support!

But as I said up top, this doesn't apply to everyone. I know there are people who may be losing their jobs or at least missing out on hours at work. If there is any way that we can help you, please don't hesitate to let us know.

This isn't the Lent we thought we would have, but it's the Lent that we've been given. God is a master at bringing about order in times of chaos, healing in times of sickness, and goodness and blessings from even the most terrible of circumstances. Let us pray that this crisis will end soon, and that God will draw good out of the evil. Let the lukewarm be inflamed, and the tepid boil over with love. Let the doubtful be certain, and the ignorant full of wisdom. Let those who have strayed be brought back, and let sinners repent. Let us all be brought to a greater and deeper love for our Eucharistic Lord, and let that never cease.

Our God has never abandoned his people, and he will not abandon us now. We, the Downtown Catholic community in Wilmington, continue in our mission of seeking and sharing the face of Jesus Christ and growing together in faith, hope, and charity. May God bless us in this time.

Thank you so much for your patience and generosity with the length of this letter. I look forward to being in touch with you—and seeing you!—soon.

*God bless you!
Father McQuaide*

Mailing Addresses for Banking Bill Pay:

Cathedral of Saint Peter

500 West St.
Wilmington DE, 19801
(302) 654-5920

Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception

1414 N. King Street
Wilmington, DE 19801
(302) 652-0743

Saint Patrick

1414 N. King Street
Wilmington, DE 19801
(302) 652-0743