



NATIVITY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Pray • Serve • Give

COVID-19 Parish Update

March 19, 2020

The priests of the parish are praying for you and your loved ones during this difficult time. We remember, in particular, those suffering from the COVID 19 virus, those separated from their families and loved ones during this time, care givers, medical professionals, and all those affected by this illness.

Jesus proclaims that He is with us – even in a moment like this. He consoles us with His grace which moves us from fear. He also tells us that whatever we do for one another, we do for Him. As people of faith, we live in hope. As people of faith, we treat one another as we would treat Christ himself.

As we know, Good Friday leads to the glory of the resurrection. For Mary and the disciples, the hours between those events must have been agonizing. The fear and anxiety must have been overwhelming. But after a few days, Christ who rose from the dead, stood in their midst and freed them from fear and paralysis. As Christ did for his Blessed Mother and his disciples, he does for us today.

Listed below are some updates from Nativity Parish based on the letter we received from Bishop Parkes on Wednesday, March 18, 2020:

- **Public Celebration of the Mass** - Effective immediately, public celebration of the Mass has been suspended in our diocese. Along with that, Bishop Parkes has lifted the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays.
- **Live-streaming Mass** - Our parish is exploring how you can share in the celebration of the Mass while the public suspension of Mass continues. We are looking into how we can record and post the Mass for your viewing and/or post a live streaming of the Mass. For the latest information on that, please check out our website (nativitycatholicchurch.org/coronavirus) and social media pages.
- **Weddings and Funerals** - Public liturgical celebrations – like Mass, Penance Services, etc. – and parish social events and ministry gatherings will be suspended until further notice. Exceptions are weddings and funerals, which need to be scheduled through our parish office. Funeral Homes and the CDC are telling us that 10 or less can attend those gatherings.
- **Outreach** - Social Service ministries – like the Food Pantry and Meals on Wheels – are still being offered, at least for the time being. Volunteers and members of our staff are graciously assisting with these ministries.
- **Baptisms** are celebrated in emergencies only.
- **Anointing of the Sick** is celebrated on request. Per some of the CDC guidelines and hospital / medical restrictions, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to always assist you in person.
- **Nativity Chapel** will remain open for personal prayer and devotion Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4 pm.
- **Church Office Hours** - The parish office will be open during these hours.
 - o Monday – Wednesday – 8:30 am to 4 pm
 - o Thursday – 8:30 am to 10 am – staff will be assisting with social services outreach
 - o Friday – 8:30 am to noon
 - o You can call the church office during those same hours as well.
 - o PLEASE do not come to the church office if you are feeling ill.



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- **Updates** - Our clergy and staff will regularly evaluate the viability of these different offerings in the days and weeks ahead. We will base our determination on the information and recommendations we receive from government leaders, the CDC, and the Diocese of St. Petersburg. We will inform you at regular intervals about these updates via our website and social media pages.
- **Devotions, Prayers, Etc.** - Various pastoral ministries will begin posting resources which will help to nourish you spiritually and theologically in the weeks to come. We will also post links to devotions and live streamed Masses from around the diocese and the country.
- **Confessions** - At this time, we are not offering confessions at their regularly scheduled time on Saturdays. On a typical Saturday afternoon, 40-50 people show up for confessions. Since that is well in excess of the recommended 10 people that should gather in these times, we are suspending Saturday confessions. Church law teaches that, especially in extraordinary circumstances, you can experience the fulness of God's mercy and forgiveness when praying a sincere Act of Contrition along with making a commitment to participate in confession when that sacrament is offered once again.

Our clergy and staff stand ready to help you. We remain in solidarity and prayer with you in the days and weeks to come. Let us pray for each other – that the grace of our living and loving Lord will sustain us. And that we will show the face of Christ to others in our words and in our actions.

Finally, and certainly not least, our parish depends upon your generous stewardship in order to maintain the ministries here at Nativity and pay our staff which faithfully serves our community. Almost all of that stewardship comes from your contributions made at the offertory during Mass. Only about one-fourth of that offertory is made on-line. The other three-fourths actually come from what you put into the collection basket. When we do not hold public celebrations of the Mass on the weekend, we have no way of making up the shortfall in our offertory. Essentially, it would only be a few weeks before we would be unable to pay our staff and meet our financial obligations.

For that reason, I am asking you to consider contributing to our parish online. Your generous and regular gift on-line would go a long way in supporting our dedicated staff and ensure the continuation of our ministries, even while away from our church campus. Online giving is easy to do. Consider checking out the box on our parish website entitled “Online Giving” at the bottom of the page and the link will take you through the sign-up process. Or you can send in your offertory gift by mail. The address of the parish is:

Nativity Catholic Church
705 E Brandon Blvd.
Brandon, FL 33511

May God bless you for your generosity and kindness to our parish during these challenging times.

Fr. John Tapp
Fr. Tapp