

Message from Fr. Paul Key
Tuesday, April 7, 2020 Communication with congregation
Giving Holy Week Our Best

Although we are not going to be able to share the Eucharist together, neither this week, nor at the Saturday Vigil Mass, nor on Easter Sunday morning, we can take advantage of this adversity to grow in our faith. It could be like showing up at a very poorly attended Mass, with no music, and we are expected to make all the indicated responses. Isn't that hard to do? Being more on our own could help us get down to the profound meaning of each event?

For example, we aren't even having a Chrism Mass this year with the Bishop. He told us to continue using our oils into the next year, until we can have a time to bless the oils. How sharing this with the Bishop unites us sacramentally. We miss it!

For Holy Thursday we should remember that it is the initiation of two Sacraments, the most Holy Eucharist and Sacrament of Orders. It is at this meal that Jesus demonstrates how we all are to be servants of each other in "washing each other's feet." After humbling himself and washing the Apostles' feet he said,

"Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

On Good Friday, he made the ultimate sacrifice for us, being crucified, acting out in love what he had taught in love. Let us remember that this is the only day of the year that we never have a Mass.

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Then on Sunday morning, how we joyfully celebrate his Resurrection, in which he demonstrated that he was the Son of God and also showed what will happen to us if we are faithful with him. Let us remember these basics of our Christian life as we go through Holy Week, even though we cannot be together physically, we are together spiritually as members of His Mystical Body.

Let us remember that at this time we are not being persecuted. We are not hiding away in the catacombs as the early Christians had to do. We are being "good neighbors", willingly obeying the civil authorities as well as our

Bishop in not meeting so as not to spread a serious disease around. Maybe this is one of the ways we wash each others' feet and offer up sacrifice for each other. Many of you have shared with me how much it hurts not to be directly with the Lord on Easter, receiving him sacramentally as the Body of Christ. Rather, let us persevere in our faith, growing personally during this time of difficulty, so that we might come back together deeper and stronger Christians, better prepared to share our faith with others.

This is a good time to guide our walk with Jesus using the measure of good stewardship. In regards to time, let us evaluate our prayer time and meditation time with Jesus and His Word. In regards to our talents, even though we are under more pressure and anxiety, let us seek how to serve and assist others a little bit more. In regards to our treasure, sometimes it is in prioritizing our use of our money that our faith can be most firmly anchored. At a time of economic uncertainty and fear of not having enough, our maintaining of our tithe, our portion to God, might protect us even more. Just a reminder of our Mass schedule, private Masses that will be live streamed.

Thursday evening, bilingual at 7:00, Friday afternoon liturgy, English at 3:00 p.m. and Spanish at 7:00 p.m.

We will not have a vigil Mass. I encourage you to watch our Bishop celebrate this Mass at the Cathedral.

We will have both Masses Easter Sunday morning, English at 10:00 and Spanish at 12:00. I will try to have reflection sheets on the homilies our before each Mass so you can follow it and meditate upon it.

We are making progress overcoming this disease. Every day we are more clear on therapeutic ways to treat it. Every day we are closer to having a vaccine. Every day we are closer to opening up our society to normal activity, although it looks as if it will be closer to the end of April rather than Easter.

Finally, I remind you of my challenge: to identify someone who has fallen away from the faith, to pray for that person, to witness to that person, and to invite him/her back to Church once we can meet together. Easter is not dead. Let our Lord live even more dynamically in our lives at this time.

