

18 March 2020

Dear Parishioners of St. Ansgar & St. Bridget:

As you're aware, the COVID-19 virus has affected numerous aspects of our daily lives, in this country and around the world. One important area that has been affected is our public worship – not only for Catholics but others as well. Diocesan bishops, including our own, have issued directives to try to address this matter.

Soon after the COVID-19 virus became prevalent in the United States, Bp. Callahan issued some guidelines which included how to handle the Sign of Peace, as well as guidelines for Communion under both Species. I chose to have Communion under one form only, and to leave it to individuals' discretion as to whether or not to give or accept the Sign of Peace.

This past Sunday, I announced new changes from the bishop, namely that the Sign of Peace is to be suspended, and that Communion under one form is to be mandatory. In addition, Bp. Callahan suspended all parish activities (breakfasts, lunches, gatherings, etc.) beginning 18 March.

On Monday, 16 March, the bishop issued a directive to **suspend all public Masses** within the Diocese of La Crosse. This pertains to Masses during the week, as well as on Sunday. However, Funeral Masses and Nuptial Masses will be allowed. This suspension will remain in effect until **1 May**. As far as the Liturgical Calendar is concerned, this covers the remainder of Lent, Passiontide, the Paschal Triduum, as well as roughly two weeks of Eastertide.

During this time I recommend you pray an Act of Spiritual Communion each day. I will attach a sample for you to use. The readings for this Sunday are as follows. Prayerfully read over them. I am attaching a short meditation based on the writings of St. Augustine as well.

1 Samuel 16: 1 - 13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5: 8 – 14

John 9: 1 - 41

I know this will be very difficult for all of us. I'm sure Bp. Callahan's decision was not easy for him either, so it's important that we keep that in mind. I will continue to offer the Holy Sacrifice in private, as will other priests, and the Mass intentions will be fulfilled and honored; a list of the Mass intentions will be attached. During this time, I'm asking all of you to continue to pray for me, for our bishops, world leaders, and doctors. Also, keep praying for each other. Our prayers are critical during this time. I recommend that if you have a favorite devotion or prayer, to offer those devotions for a quick resolution to this situation. Prayers to the Child Jesus, the Precious Blood of Christ, and the Holy Name of Jesus are quite efficacious.

I'm also asking for your continued weekly financial support of our parishes. This is important because even though Mass isn't being offered publicly, the parishes have various financial obligations that still must be met. Your gifts may be mailed to the parish or if you would like you can stop by the office.

I will still of course be available for visits, Anointing of the Sick, and Confession if you need to avail yourselves of these sacraments.

If anything changes regarding this situation, it will be made known to you. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Mark Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small horizontal line above the "l" in "Miller".

Rev. Fr. Mark Miller – Parochial Administrator

Encl.