

Recently, I was speaking with a priest who said it felt like his entire day was like Sunday afternoon, meaning that work was done for the day. There is a strange sense of not knowing what to do as clergy and staff. However, it got me thinking. Yes, this time is unlike any other we have experienced, and it may be like Sunday afternoon. But for us, Sunday afternoon does not mean that our work is done. In our community, we normally have mass on Sunday afternoon, as well as the university mass in the evening. And so, I do not feel as if we have nothing to do. Our work has just begun.

We will be sending out regular notices about what is happening at the parish. Just because the building is closed does not mean that our mission is over, that we do not continue to serve one another. The Church is you and me – all of us together – not a building. You can check out our events on Facebook; even if you are not a member on Facebook, these prayers and events are accessible to you (<https://www.facebook.com/StVincentDePaulParishChicago>). Our website will also have links to these events, as well as any communication from me. Check out our e-bulletin as well.

Last week, I said that we were temporarily closing our soup kitchen to ensure the safety and health of our volunteers and guests. Beginning this week, we will have a trial period in which the soup kitchen and food pantry will be open one day per week. The Vincentians in the DePaul residence will work together to prepare and serve the meal, taking all necessary precautions to ensure the health and safety of our guests. At this time, like many other nonprofits, we will not ask for volunteers to come together. I know that many of you want to serve, but it is truly for the best for you to stay home and limit the impact of this virus.

As a staff and community, we are exploring additional ways to reach out to you. Hopefully, later this week, we should have the ability to gather together via Zoom. And see below for our plans for Holy Week and Easter. I also will hold “virtual” office hours on Monday and Thursday from 1pm-4pm. If you would like to set an appointment to talk with me, please email me at [jdixon20@depaul.edu](mailto:jdixon20@depaul.edu) or simply call at that time (773-325-4155).

Lastly, I encourage you to reach out to one another. Call a friend you haven't spoken to for a while. Use FaceTime to see your family. And, above all, use some of your time to pray, reminding yourself that God is very much present with us now, even when all seems dark. Pray for yourself and your family, pray for all those suffering from COVID-19, pray for the medical professionals who are working tirelessly to serve, and pray for our parish community. May God bless you all.