

Dear Friends,

I wanted to reach out to provide you with a few parish and personal updates,.

- You may have heard on the news that the archdiocese announced a phased re-opening of churches. Working in collaboration with the state, the re-opening would begin with opportunities for some of the sacraments – baptism, reconciliation and marriage – as well as funeral masses and private prayer. At this time, gatherings of more than 10 people at any time are still prohibited. I am working with the parish staff to complete mandated training and other required preparations in order to open again in this limited capacity. I also will be reaching out to parishioners to serve on the leadership team and to volunteer to assist in being greeters and cleaners. If you are not a vulnerable member of the population and are interested in serving in this capacity, please email me (jdixon20@depaul.edu) Next week, we will contact people who have already scheduled baptisms and weddings to make arrangements. In addition, the plan will be communicated to you through all of our online media. Once we receive approval to reopen in this limited capacity, I will send a notice. Because of all of the necessar logistics involved, I would not expect it to happen before May 25.

As I have said before, the safety of everyone is my top priority. As difficult as it may be to refrain from receiving the sacraments, it is necessary for us to slow the spread of this virus. I personally know of at least four parishioners who have battled (successfully!) against it, and the Little Sisters of the Poor down the street can attest to how rapidly it can spread in a community. While we will likely not have access to the Eucharist and regular mass for a while yet, we can remind ourselves that Christ continues to work in our hearts and our lives; sacraments are not the only way that God can reach us. Grace is everywhere if we stop to look for it. Perhaps you can take some time today to reflect on how God is present to you right now. As uncomfortable as it may be, I encourage you to be present in the now. Don't rush into what the future may be before it comes into focus, but see where the Lord is with you right now in this moment.

- If you would like someone to be included on our daily prayer list, please email me (jdixon20@depaul.edu). We have a dedicated group of parishioners who pray daily for our intentions. Please let me know if you or someone you know has contracted the virus; I will work to accompany you during those difficult moments.
- I am so very grateful to all of you who have continued to support the parish and our outreach ministries. It is through your generosity that we will be able to be ready and prepared to engage the “new normal” when we reopen.
- Several of you have asked about the Vincentians. We are all healthy, thanks be to God. We have sought to limit our exposure to one another (as best as we can) and practice social distancing in public. Our collective efforts thus far have paid dividends in the fact that we have not been affected directly by the virus.

- Finally, thank you for your continued prayers for my sister Sommer as she continues her treatment for leukemia. She had been at home for the past few weeks, enjoying spending time with her family and being in remission. Testing we did determined that I was a match for a stem cell donation, which I did earlier this week. She returned to Northwestern this week to begin another round of chemo before receiving the transplant on May 19. Please keep her in your prayers that the transplant may be successful!