

April 29, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

I wanted to write today to provide a few updates regarding parish activities and to announce a new outreach program.

- The latest from the archdiocese is that our offices and church buildings will continue to be closed through May, regardless of what happens legally with the governor's stay-at-home extension. We and the archdiocese are committed to promoting the health and well-being of everyone.
- The archdiocese has assembled a task force to create a strategy for the reopening of our parishes. It will likely be a gradual process. Although at this time, I do not know what it will look like, I ask for your patience as we slowly get back to a routine of parish life. We have not received any information yet regarding the celebration of sacraments, such as baptisms, weddings, First Communions or the completion of the RCIA for our adults. When that information is made available, we will share it with you.
- Throughout May, our ministry will continue to be online at our Facebook page (facebook.com/stvincentdepaulchicago). Please note that you do NOT have to have a Facebook account to watch it. In addition to Sunday mass at 11am, we offer the Divine Mercy novena on Monday, music and mediation on Tuesday, rosary on Wednesday and Scripture reflection on Thursday. There also will be special events, such as "Ask Fr. Jeremy" on Friday May 1 and other short videos and reflections from me, the other Vincentians and parishioners. In addition, I continue to offer daily mass for your intentions and am available to talk with you. I know that these are difficult times for many people in many different ways, and I am here to help support you and listen.
- Regarding our outreach ministry, the food pantry and soup kitchen continue to operate on a smaller scale. We serve meals twice per week, on Wednesday and Saturday. Some of the Vincentian priests and myself, who all live together, are staffing the kitchen and serving to-go bags outside. We are blessed to have many wonderful and willing volunteers who desire to help at this time. However, to limit possible exposure to COVID-19 and to keep everyone safe and healthy at this time, we are not asking for other volunteers. It is next to impossible to be "socially distant" while preparing the meals. When we begin to re-open the church, we will again look at what can be done to expand our services in a safe and healthy manner.
- We are taking donations on Wednesdays from 11am-1pm in the soup kitchen to help stock the soup kitchen and support our neighborhood partners. You are welcome to stop by then to drop off items. I want to thank all those who have contributed donations last week and through the mail. Items to donate include socks, toiletries, non-perishable food, prepackaged snacks and

cookies, bread, coffee, powdered creamer, sugar, and hand sanitizer, gloves and masks for our homeless guests.

- Over the past few weeks, I have reflected on what more can we do? And thanks to some generous donors, I am happy to announce the creation of the St. Vincent de Paul Emergency Assistance Fund. This will provide short-term, emergency financial support to parishioners, and those who are sponsored by parishioners. It is designed to give an extra hand to those of you who may be struggling financially. Any of you who need this help are invited to apply [here](#).

In closing, I wanted to thank you all again for your continued support and prayers during this time. It has been challenging to transition to being a “virtual” church, yet with the assistance of many parishioners and our amazing staff, we have done so well. In addition, I thank you for your continued financial support, as so many of you have continued to support our mission of service. Please reach out to me if you have further ideas for ministry, outreach or community building. May God continue to bless you and your families.

In St. Vincent,

Fr. Jeremy