

Dear Parishioners of St. Joseph Church,

Hopefully we have had some time to digest recent news – the directives from local, provincial and federal governments and from Bishop Crosby of our own Hamilton Diocese – that invites us to work together and do whatever is necessary to contain the COVID 19 coronavirus, including:

- Premier Ford's declaration today of a "State of Emergency" (restaurants and bars closed, no more than 50 people gathering in one place, etc.) and
- Bishop Crosby's directives about public worship and the sacramental life of the Church (no weekday or weekend Masses, no funerals in Churches, Baptisms celebrated only privately, etc.)

Earlier this afternoon I forwarded to you Bishop Crosby's letter of today, a hope-filled prayer that we remain **vigilant but visible**, in acts of generosity, to our families and neighbours in this time of trial, especially to the most vulnerable. We thank God for the blessings we receive even in these challenging times – the love we share. As a parish family, there are things we need to keep in mind.

- A. The Parish Office is closed until further notice, but we, your priests and staff, are present and ready to help wherever and whenever needed. What does this mean? If you wish to contact any of our pastoral team (Priests, Deacon or Youth Minister), please call the office at 519-745-9302 and leave a message. We will return your call and determine the best ways to respond to your requests, whether that be to meet with you, to visit a sick, elderly or homebound person, etc.
- B. All parish meetings and events are cancelled until further notice. This includes CWL, SVDP, Choir, all parish committees, etc. and all other meetings and events scheduled at the parish, whether large or small. We are being called to respect all people and their differing views about how best to handle this crisis. Until all members can and are free to attend a meeting, it is best not to have a meeting with only some members present. Phone calls and emails are encouraged so we can touch base with one another and carry on our pastoral activities.
- C. In the next few days, we will be sending out a list of helpful resources you can find online during this time to stay in touch with our Catholic Faith. In the meantime, we encourage you to check out the Hamilton Diocese Website ([www.hamiltondiocese.com](http://www.hamiltondiocese.com)), and Salt + Light TV ([saltandlighttv.org](http://saltandlighttv.org)), where Mass is streamed live 4 times per day.

Also, follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/stjosephkitchener](https://www.facebook.com/stjosephkitchener)) for updates from the parish as well as links. Our Youth Group also has a Twitter account (@stjosephkyouth) and Instagram (@stjosephkitcheneryouth) if you are looking for resources for families and youth.

We, your priests, will be celebrating daily Mass together but without the participation of a congregation. We will be praying especially for you, our friends and parishioners, and especially for the sick and those affected by the coronavirus. Please join us in praying for one another, and let's help one another to nourish and sustain us in our faith. This is a truly a cross to carry, an unprecedented journey, an exceptional "Eucharistic fast".

Blessings.

Fr. Brian