

March 18, 2020

Dear Parishioners of St. Rose,

These days are heavy with emotion as we receive the news of the suspension of public celebrations of the Holy Mass in the Diocese of Nashville. Please refer to the attached letter from Bishop Spalding. I support this difficult decision of the bishop for the common good. The words of the first reading from the Prophet Daniel from Mass yesterday are very helpful:

"For we are reduced, O Lord, beyond any other nation,
brought low everywhere in the world this day
because of our sins.
We have in our day no prince, prophet, or leader,
no burnt offering, sacrifice, oblation, or incense,
no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you.
But with contrite heart and humble spirit
let us be received;
As though it were burnt offerings of rams and bullocks,
or thousands of fat lambs,
So let our sacrifice be in your presence today
as we follow you unreservedly;
for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame.
And now we follow you with our whole heart,
we fear you and we pray to you.
Do not let us be put to shame,
but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy.
Deliver us by your wonders,
and bring glory to your name, O Lord."

These words are very somber, and yet they express faith and confidence in God even in the most difficult circumstances. Daniel's confidence in God was rewarded and so will ours!

Even though Mass is suspended, the bishop has allowed for churches to be open and for confessions to be offered. The church at St. Rose will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, except Sunday. On Sundays, we will be live-streaming Mass on Facebook (and perhaps on other outlets) from the church at 11 a.m. in English and 2 p.m. in Spanish and so the church will have to be closed from 10 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 3 p.m. We will also live-stream daily Mass from St. Rose at 8:15 a.m. Monday through Saturday and at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday in Spanish. Confessions will be available from 5-6 p.m. everyday and also from 9-10 a.m. on Saturday. (When coming to confession be sure to practice social distancing from others who may be waiting.) All other activities at St. Rose will remain suspended until April 3. The parish office will be staffed for phone and email communication during regular hours, and the emergency number remains available for priestly needs after hours. Please do not come by the office in person for your safety and for the safety of the staff.

We are working to provide content remotely and digitally for PSR, RCIA, youth group and other ministries. Please make use of our parish subscription to FORMED for all sorts of wonderful religious content and programming. (If you do not already have a formed account, go to www.Formed.org, click on Sign Up, select I Belong to a Parish, and search for St. Rose either by name or 37130. Once you have an account you sign in with your email address on the site.)

Finally, Bishop Spalding calls us to join him in a day of fasting, abstinence, and prayer today, Wednesday, March 18. Let's join him in prayer because God always hears our prayers and sends His grace when we pray. We will find our way through this situation by His grace! Please know of my prayers for you, and I am counting on yours. Let us pray for each other!

Faithfully,

Fr. John Sims Baker
Pastor
St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church