March 23, 2020

Monday

Dear Parishioner,

There have been more directives from the Diocese to the pastors. Last night the Vicar Forane of the East Deanery of the Diocese of Lake Charles called to pass on the messages of Fr. Buller, the Vicar General of the Diocese, who is coordinating for the Bishop the dictates of the Diocese, in line with what he receives from the official entities, who are the source of advice over how to address the Coronavirus situation.

The latest changes are:

* Our business office is to be closed for walk-in business.
* The priests are asked to not visit anyone at home or have company in the rectory. Of course, the Sacraments of the Last Rites or anointing of the sick will still be given by the priest in your home.
* If you seek the Sacrament of Confession, please do not kneel but sit in the chair in the confessional. The reason for this is the Diocese is mandating six feet between the priest and the penitent. If I believe a person with symptoms enters the room, confessions will be moved outside and the confessional disinfected. Please do not go to confession if you are symptomatic or have been diagnosed with the virus. If you are symptomatic and in a state of mortal sin such that you need confession and believe your life is in danger to some degree, call the office so that we can determine how to offer confession to you.

As of now, the church will remain open and the Sacrament of Confession is offered from 11:30am – 12:00pm every day except for Monday. Confession is also offered by appointment. It is possible this could change, so visit the Tabernacle while you can.

I am very sure that Fr. Buller is in touch with the officials of the State of Louisiana. The Governor gave a press conference yesterday afternoon and stated that testing updates from the state would be disseminated every day at noon. I presume you will be able to hear these updates on at least an LPB channel on television if not all of the channels. I am sure the radio is also offering the press conferences. For a **very informative** press conference given by the Governor last night, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mh60jU9RUYA> to watch his wide ranging news conference. I found it refreshingly specific, calm and without hype. Please watch it. It is a very good press conference. One statistic he offered was most grave, which is that the growth rate of infection in Louisiana exceeds every state or country worldwide. In other words, according to the size of the Louisiana population, there is no country (including China and Italy) which is showing new infections at a rate as rapid as the state of Louisiana. I do not know if this is all cases total or the current rate of new cases as of yesterday. In any case the rate of new cases is grave.

I would not be surprised of further directives from Fr. Buller or the Bishop as the State of Louisiana and /or the Federal Government assimilates new data daily. Please check your e-mail and the church’s website often (ourladyofthelake.church), as this manner of communication will be the means by which the parish and myself contact you about any further developments and how they may affect our parish.

I hope that you will come to Church while it is still open. This weekend, a group of youth, on their own, came into church to pray the rosary. This is an effect of their cooperation with grace I their lives. Please cooperate yourselves with whatever grace God offers you, remembering that Our Lady is considered the dispenser of God’s graces.

On Sundays, you can come to the Church and remain in your car or watch at the open doors (keeping social distancing) outside of the church and listen to the mass broadcasted over our outside speakers. This weekend we had a number who came to be in proximity to the Eucharist. I will look at live streaming if it appears that this situation will last for a time longer than what it is currently expected (April 12). Currently, there are a number of daily online and televised masses which you can find links to on our website (ourladyofthelake.church.)

Last, thank you so much to all those who continue to support the church materially (ourladyofthelake.church/giving.) We need your help to cover our usual bills (such as utilities, etc.) and what work our employees can do within the Governor’s and Diocese’s directives.

Faithfully yours,

Fr. Alexius

Other website resources:

What businesses are mandated to close and allowed to remain open: gov.louisiana.gov