

*St. Ann Church*  
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March 18, 2020

Greetings to you my dear parish family,

As we face for the first time in our lifetimes the cancellation of public Masses not only here in Milton and Vermont, but throughout the world, we are reminded that Jesus is still present in the blessed sacrament in the tabernacle. Bishop Coyne announced this week that there will be no public Masses of any kind – weekday or weekend - beginning Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> until at least April 15<sup>th</sup>. All public parish events and meetings are also cancelled. These precautions are taken to keep all of us safe from the spread of Coronavirus, but especially those most vulnerable among us.

During this period, I will be saying Masses privately for the intentions that are scheduled. If you prefer not to have your intention said in this way, please call the rectory and the staff will be happy to reschedule it for you. All baptisms and funerals will still take place, but only in accordance with the current guidelines, having no more than 10 people in attendance. For cemetery burials, there is no limit to attendance, but people are asked to maintain a 6-foot distance from one another. Also, I am not allowed to make hospital visits or communion calls to the homebound during this time with the exception of emergencies. Confessions, however, will continue on Saturdays from 3:30PM to 4:10PM in the chapel; you will be asked to do so behind the screen, rather than be face-to-face with Fr. Feltz. If others are in the chapel waiting, we remind you to keep 6 feet away from one another.

The church will be open daily for private visits from 8:00AM to 5:00PM. We encourage you also to reflect on the Sunday readings or to watch Mass on TV on the weekends. Doing these things at the times you would usually do so, helps keep you connected with your faith during this challenging time.

It goes without saying, but please **DO NOT COME TO CHURCH** for private prayers or confession if you are not feeling 100% well. This not only safeguards you and your family's health but will do the same for your fellow parishioners. We must all be considerate of one another and do our best to follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC. In many instances staying in place at home is the best thing to do!

Since schools are also closed and parents have children at home, we remind you to also keep up with their religious education instruction. This is especially important for those students who are making the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation this year. Our Religious Education staff will provide information to you via email and our Facebook page to help you continue to work to pass down our faith to your sons and daughters. Feel free also to contact Liza (922-7688) or Erin (557-1941) by phone, or by email at [stann.reled@comcast.net](mailto:stann.reled@comcast.net).

Many families are also concerned about finances, since many people are having their hours reduced or are being laid off. So, too, in the parish, we will have bills coming in that we will have to pay. We encourage you to contribute as you can, either by sending your contributions to the parish in the mail (to P.O. Box 1) or by contacting your bank to set up an automated payment (in the form of a check to the parish) so that we can remain as financially stable as possible.

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We are currently in the process of setting up online giving; more information will be communicated to you as this system is put in place.

Even though there will be no public Holy Week celebrations, the palms will be blessed as usual on Saturday April 4<sup>th</sup>. You are welcomed to come and take a palm "to go" beginning on Palm Sunday, continuing through the week during the times the church will be open. We will also continue with the Easter flower decorations; if you would like to still donate in memory of a loved one, you are asked to send that information and donation to the rectory.

We will also continue to publish the bulletin weekly on our parish website to communicate up to date information as we have it. You will see the Mass intentions listed, but with no specific times, since Fr. Feltz will be celebrating them privately.

Following this letter, I have provided a list of resources for you to use to help you keep as connected to your faith as is possible during this time. It lists our parish website information, Facebook Page information, as well as links to the Diocesan website for ways to watch Mass and access information. If you have questions, please call the rectory and either Fr. or the staff will answer them as best they can. Both the rectory office and the St. Ann Food Shelf will continue to be open and operate weekdays from 9:45am to 2:45PM.

As we face these many challenges that have disrupted our daily routines, it is easy to allow fear and anxiety to take over. Social distancing may limit our physical contact, but it doesn't mean we can't effectively communicate with one another, especially in this technological day and age of cellphones, internet, etc.. We need to make every effort to make Christ present to one another; it is important to remember we are not alone and we can get through this with the grace of Jesus.

Even though you are not able to attend Mass right now, you are encouraged to watch Mass on TV or online, and make "Spiritual Communion", in which you ask the Lord to come to you and give you the strength to deal with these many challenges. (Links to Masses, this prayer, and a special prayer from Pope Francis, is included on the Resources page that follows).

Let us keep our focus on Jesus, knowing he and his love are greater than any virus or illness and that he is present in the Blessed Sacrament and the tabernacle. As we have overcome past illnesses and challenges, we will overcome this one as well. Time, faith, and patience goes a long way; let us continue to do our part to take care of ourselves and the vulnerable among us. Please know you all are in my thoughts and prayers. With care and concern, I remain,

Sincerely,



Fr. John G. Feltz

P.S. You will also receive our Easter card in the next couple of weeks; though it has Holy Week service information on it, we remind you there will be NO HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES. This greeting is to wish you Happy Easter & to keep you connected to your faith during this challenging time.

## **ONLINE RESOURCES:**

- **St. Ann Parish Website:** <http://www.stannmilton.com/>
- **St. Ann Parish FaceBook Page:** Search for “*St. Ann Church Family of Milton VT*”
- **Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington Covid-19 Information:** [www.vermontcatholic.org/covid-19/](http://www.vermontcatholic.org/covid-19/)
- **Magnificat:** <https://us.magnificat.net/>

## **PRAYERS:**

### **Spiritual Communion Prayer:**

“My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most holy Eucharist. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.”

### **Pope’s Prayer to Mary for protection during the coronavirus pandemic**

O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus’ pain, keeping your faith firm. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

## **TO ACCESS MASS ONLINE OR ON TELEVISION:**

- The TV Mass is seen live on Sundays at 6 a.m. on WCAX Channel 3.
- Catholic TV (Boston) at [www.catholictv.org/masses/catholictv-mass](http://www.catholictv.org/masses/catholictv-mass)

- Catholic TV (Boston) – Notre Dame Sunday Mass online:  
[www.catholictv.org/masses/notre-dame-mass](http://www.catholictv.org/masses/notre-dame-mass)