

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church
4609 Martin Street South
Cropwell, Alabama 35054
Phone: (205)525-5161 Fax: (205)525-5162

March 18, 2020

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

On Tuesday, March 17th, Bishop Robert Baker issued a decree suspending the public celebration of Holy Mass through April 3, 2020. The decree also suspends other gatherings for prayer, such as Stations of the Cross and prayer groups, and other public events that may take place on the parish property. This order may be changed or extended after April 3rd. It can be viewed on the parish website www.ollpellcity.com, the parish Facebook page, the Website of the Diocese of Birmingham, or in the next issue of One Voice.

In consultation with the staff and the Parish Pastoral Council, I have decided to offer the following opportunities to meet your spiritual needs:

- The church will be open daily from 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. for private prayer. The current government regulations limit capacity to 25 people and “social distancing” should be observed.
- If anyone wishes to receive Holy Communion, please contact me or one of the deacons and we will arrange a time to receive communion either at the church or at your home. The phone numbers are: Father Bill Lucas, 205-525-5161, 205-525-4711 or 205-383-8134; Deacon Terry Rumore, 205-253-9223; Deacon Serge Brazzolotto, 205-753-3230; Deacon Lee Robinson, 205-936-9330.
- I am available for the sacrament of Penance by appointment.
- I am available for the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick by appointment.
- No other sacraments may be celebrated, except in danger of death. (Baptism, Confirmation, etc.)
- Funerals will be limited to grave side services. The capacity limitation of 25 people should be observed. A memorial Mass can be scheduled for a later date.

- If you are unable to receive the sacraments of Penance or Holy Communion, directions for making a Perfect Act of Contrition and Spiritual Communion are available at the parish Facebook page and website, www.ollpellcity.com.
- Televised and streamed masses are available from many places. Two examples are EWTN and the web site for Bishop Robert Barron. (Google it.)

Tithing:

Because there will be no public masses for a time, people will have to use different means for tithing.

- If you are signed up for on-line banking, your bank can process and mail a check for your donation to the parish.
- You can mail your donation to the parish address: 4609 Martin Street South, Cropwell, AL, 35054.
- You can use the drop box next to the door of the parish office to deposit your donation. If you don't use parish envelopes, please put your contribution in a marked envelope so that you can receive credit. Or contact the office and start using parish envelopes.
- We are developing an on-line giving service. When that is established, we will alert all registered parishioners.

The Bulletin:

- The bulletin is available on-line at the parish web site, www.ollpellcity.com.
- 50 paper copies of the bulletin will be available in the church or by mail for those who do not have internet service. Contact the parish office if you would like the bulletin mailed to you.

Compassionate Care:

- There may be those in our communities who need assistance with the tasks of daily life. (Groceries, prescription pick-up, etc.) If you or someone you know has these needs, or if you want to volunteer to help, we have a ministry called Caring Hearts. You can contact them by calling Barbara McGowin at 205-913-0029 or calling the parish office.
- There may be a spike in unemployment. If someone needs financial assistance, please call the office.
- Use the "Buddy System". Check on your neighbors and friends to see how they are doing, especially those who are normally homebound. Loneliness can be eased by a phone call.

This crisis is a test of our faith. It is an opportunity to deepen and strengthen our faith when the normal practices of that faith are disrupted. Jesus Christ is Emmanuel. He is always with us. Some of the familiar ways that we encounter Him have been removed for a time. If we seek Him, He will show us new ways to encounter Him. There is comfort in the familiar and for a time we may feel lost and uncomfortable. But we are not alone. Jesus Christ is with us.

In the Letter of St. James, we read, "Faith without works is dead." This crisis is also an opportunity for us to find new ways to practice our faith daily and locally. God is never outdone in generosity. God can inspire us to be generous in a time of fear and uncertainty. The Cross of Jesus Christ calls us to be compassionate to those who suffer, even to ourselves as we suffer. As "Missionary Disciples" we are called to bring Christ's love to those who need it. People are feeling their need for Christ's love in an acute way presently. Christ will inspire us to be instruments of His love for the world.

Let us pray for one another.

Sincerely in Christ,

Father Bill

Rev. William P. Lucas
Pastor