

Dear Parish Family,

I pray that this note finds each of you in good health in both body and soul. Fr Buettner shared with me how much he enjoyed being with you and I'm sure his usual wit brought some welcome levity in the midst of accelerating events. It seems that our Lenten bootcamp has ratcheted up more than we might have expected; yet we can still be of good cheer, for *God makes all things serve the good of those who love Him* (Rm 8:28). Furthermore, for much of the world, which at present does not know or love Him, tribulation has always served as one of the great means of wresting the wayward from their distractions and earthly occupations. How many times have we already been reminded in Lenten readings: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live* (Ez 33:11). This refers not to earthly life but to the true life of grace leading to everlasting happiness: *I came that you might have life and have it in abundance* (Jn 10:10).

With that being said, while the **faith, hope, and love** which come from God confer on us supernatural strength, everything is not therefore rendered easy. Tribulation touches us all in various ways, but perhaps one the most fundamental experiences we all share is a greater sense of our own **dependency**. By its nature it is a deeply unsettling experience as our comfortable routines are broken, our earthly hopes and expectations are shaken, and our health, sustenance, and even lives, are no longer certain. And yet, is this not one of the most important lessons God would have us learn? In the annual Lenten cycle of the Breviary, we recall the Exodus and how God fed His people with manna from heaven, but that they were only permitted to gather enough to last one day at a time. (Cf Ex 16) These great events in salvation history were a providential preparation so that one day the words of Our Lord would be impressed even more deeply upon our hearts: *Without me you can do nothing* (Jn 15:5) and *Your heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask* (Mt 6:8). We should therefore be content to ask of Him to *give us this day our daily bread* (Mt 6:11). In Israel's day, there was an ever-present temptation to seek security in pagan practices, idolatry, political alliances, and military strength. In our own day, many will look to healthcare, government, and all manner of things (both good and bad) to the **neglect of the one true source of all blessing**. *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God!* (Ps 20:7). Let us show that we have taken these lessons to heart by pouring out our prayers in ever greater measure with child-like trust and simplicity. Would this alone not make for a powerful Lent and render our Exodus from this life to heaven more secure?

Turning to practical matters, provisions will be made for our sacramental needs, although we may have to be creative as present circumstances continue to evolve rapidly. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is being offered for your intentions each day albeit not publicly. We are seeking a venue which would allow you to be present while being mindful of the current civil directives and those of Bishop Jugis. Due to the uncertain nature of those variables, please note that the distribution of Holy Communion may be omitted. While



not ideal, it can nonetheless be the occasion of several salutary gains. First, we are reminded that **the supreme purpose of Holy Mass is not our benefit but the worship of Almighty God** Who is all good and deserving of all our love. It is the latter which is the very source of the former, i.e. by rendering to God what He deserves, He in turn mercifully bestows upon us what we do not deserve. *Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice and all these shall be added unto you* (Mt 6:33). Paradoxically, how many more divine benefits might we receive if all Catholics but took this simple lesson to heart! Second, the physical absence of our Beloved Lord can serve to **stir up greater desire, preparation, and gratitude** for this inestimable Gift. One Holy Communion made with perfect disposition has the power to transform us into saints - what a lofty goal this is as we look forward to Easter! Finally, it can spur us to make greater use of **the whole gamut of Catholic spiritual resources** - the rosary, breviary, stations of the cross, meditation, spiritual communion, and finally, and most of all, recourse to sacramental Confession. Regarding the latter, I will do everything possible to see that each and every person has the opportunity to do so before Easter. I am also attaching a bulletin from the Apostolic Penitentiary which grants a **plenary indulgence** to a number of these practices. Can we not say that the spiritual opportunities already outweigh whatever physical or material hardship might follow? **I ask that each and every member of our parish avail themselves of these great graces on a daily basis.**

On a less exalted, but still necessary note, I must make brief mention of the material needs of the parish. I commend all of you that even amidst the unexpected last minute changes this past weekend the offertory was still very strong. At the same time, we can expect that the current situation will necessitate that we be especially diligent in this matter. We will take up a collection at Masses where the faithful are attending in some manner. Please give prayerful consideration to mailing in your weekly offering if circumstances prevent you from doing so in person.

I regret that I must offer even a few lines on the matter that follows but please be attentive to scammers. There has been an increase in activity lately and we might expect even more to come as unscrupulous individuals attempt to profit in the midst of general confusion. Please know that I will not ask for any gifts, financial aid, etc. via email, text, etc. Make sure that you carefully scrutinize all such correspondence. If there is any question as to my identity, it will not be hard to obtain confirmation.

In closing and pursuant to Fr. Buettner's recent theme, **I urge every family to place themselves under the patronage of St. Joseph.** Is it mere coincidence that Joseph of Nazareth, the successor of Joseph of Egypt who provided for his people in time of great distress, had only months ago been made the special patron of our diocese for this year? As we prepare ourselves for whatever may lay ahead *Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* (Jas 1:2-4)

Please know of my daily prayers
for our entire parish family
in Domino,



Fr. Christian