

# THE CATHOLIC ADVOCATE

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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## Staying connected during the coronavirus crisis



Photo courtesy of Brandon Ocampo

Father Juan Ortega-Ortiz, parochial vicar at St. Patrick's Pro-Cathedral in Newark, livestreamed Sunday Mass on March 22 as parishes closed their doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the full story, turn to page 6.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

REJOICE IN THE LORD .....	Page 2
PARISH SUPPORT INITIATIVE.....	Page 3
REMOTE LEARNING .....	Page 8
FINANCIAL REPORT.....	Pages 9-12
CLASSIFIEDS .....	Page 18



Women's Day of Reflection  
Pages 16-17



# We should not distance ourselves from solidarity with each other

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For me, the decision to suspend all public celebrations of the Mass, schools and other gatherings in the Archdiocese of Newark due to the coronavirus was a painful one. As you're aware, Catholics have been dispensed from their Sunday obligation, and all public forms of worship are suspended, including previously scheduled confirmations, First Communion and penitential services. Baptisms, funerals, burials and previously scheduled weddings must be postponed until further notice. All churches and adoration chapels must be closed and locked until further notice. Private prayer in any parish building must be discontinued until further notice.



We suspended on-site operations in our Catholic elementary and high schools, shifting to online teaching. So far, the reports from parents and staff have been positive. We are committed to paying teacher salaries and not eliminating any jobs during this temporary shutdown.

As I said in a recent news interview, not being able to celebrate Mass with our people is a deeply personal loss. That the suspension comes during Lent, one of the most solemn seasons on the liturgical calendar, has made it an even harder decision. But I want to assure you that this suspension of essential liturgical and ministry functions will not last one hour longer than necessary.

As pastors, we find the Lord in His people. To be unable to see them, to recognize them and talk to them after Mass is very painful. We need to be especially concerned about those who, during a period of intense anxiety, feel lonely and abandoned, and who really count on public worship for their own support. We also should be concerned about how the spiritual lives of our people will be impacted by this drastic change. The Eucharist and the celebration of the Mass are so central to our Church that its absence is really felt deeply by us. "Social distancing" is necessary for the common good, but we need to counter this with a dramatic increase in what Pope Francis calls "spiritual closeness."

Many people are using all available forms of social media to reach out and comfort people to assure them that they are not alone. Some clergy already have put their health at risk by caring for people who are sick and now are in quarantine. People facing the uncertainty of a global health crisis should not live in fear, but must recognize our inter-connectedness and the desire to care for the well-being of each other.

As an archdiocese, we are committed to helping our people in whatever ways we can, including by livestreaming Masses and other prayers and devotions. To the extent that we can, we want to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to grow in faith and receive the consolation of the Word of God and the Church's prayer. Finally, if you follow me on Twitter (@CardinalJWTObin), you know that on a daily basis I have been asking Mary, Mother of the Church, to help us seek the healing power of her Son and help one another—especially those who are most vulnerable—in this time of crisis.

Reflecting on this unprecedented situation, I have a firm conviction that we will come out of this better than we were going into it. This crisis helps focus our minds on what is really important. It helps us distinguish between wants and needs. We may not need as much as we think we do. Above all, we should not distance ourselves from solidarity with each other. We are not here simply to preserve our comfort or even our lives. Speaking from a Christian standpoint, we find the greatest happiness from laying down our lives and our desire for the sake of others, for the sake of our brothers and sisters.

There is amazing solidarity that our people are showing in the face of this crisis. Perhaps some of the former polarization in our country and state communities may give way to a greater sense of connectedness, and a greater desire to help each other walk the journey. I pray it will be so.

You are in my prayers. Please pray for me as well.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark

## Here are some simple suggestions for staying close spiritually while maintaining a safe and respectful social distance:

1. Begin each day with prayer. Ask Jesus to stay close to you and to all your family and friends. Pray for the health and well-being of everyone you associate with, and of all God's people throughout the world.
2. Express your love and concern for the people you live with—your spouse, children, other relatives or friends. Comfort and encourage them when they are frightened and feeling closed-in or helpless.
3. Reach out to other family members, friends and colleagues by telephone, texting, email and other forms of social media. Let them know that you are close to them and that you share their experiences and anxiety.
4. Attend Mass and other prayers and devotions virtually. Many opportunities are available each day on television, radio and online. Participation in the life of the Church can help us feel more closely connected with God and with each other. Make the following spiritual Communion: *Dear Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive your Body and Blood. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least*
5. *spiritually into my heart. Stay close to me, Jesus, so that I may be close to all our sisters and brothers, especially those who are most in need of your loving care. Amen.*
6. As you go about your daily business—working remotely, studying at home, doing spring cleaning, caring for children or family members, preparing dinner, doing the laundry, and more—look for opportunities to offer up your activities to God in gratitude for His closeness to you.
7. To the extent that you can, share your financial resources with those in need. Online giving is available for most religious, educational and charitable organizations, but if that's not an option for you, you can write a check and mail it, or set aside some cash to give to someone in need once the current stay-at-home order has been lifted.
8. Be patient with yourself and those you love. This is a strange and difficult time for all of us. Frustration and anger are understandable reactions. We need to help each other remain calm and trust in the healing power of Jesus, who is close to us—now and always.

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NJPA  
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Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archbishop of Newark, President and Publisher

Kelly Marsicano ..... Associate Publisher ..... Kelly.Marsicano@rcan.org  
Melissa McNally ..... Editor ..... Melissa.McNally@rcan.org  
Carolyn Martins-Reitz ..... Graphic Artist ..... Carolyn.Martins-Reitz@rcan.org  
Sharon Reitz ..... Graphic Artist ..... Sharon.Reitz@rcan.org  
Mark Chrisco ..... Circulation Coordinator ..... Mark.Chrisco@rcan.org  
Marge Pearson-McCue ..... Director of Advertising ..... Marge.Pearson-McCue@rcan.org

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This issue is dedicated in memory of Carolyn Martins-Reitz. A wonderful mother and co-worker gone too soon. You will be in our hearts forever.

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# Archdiocese launches fundraising effort to support parishes during crisis

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., has announced an unprecedented fundraising initiative specifically aimed at supporting continued outreach and archdiocesan parish communities during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The effort, coordinated with GoFundMe, a global online fundraising platform, will enable parishioners to provide direct support to local churches throughout this challenging time. A dedicated website at [www.rcan.org/parishsupport](http://www.rcan.org/parishsupport) has been established for this program.

"The first place people often go in time of need is the local parish," said Cardinal Tobin. "Under the current conditions brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, parishes are limited in the services they can offer to the faithful and those in need. Please consider a tax-deductible contribution to our special Parishes in Need fund, which will be used to support those communities struggling to pay their employees, conduct outreach and cover church utility bills through this crisis."

Catholic parishes rely on weekly contributions from parishioners, known as the offertory collection, to support the work of each community, including staff wages and daily operations. In addition to Masses, many parishes provide services beyond their membership, such as counseling, meeting spaces and charitable drives for families in need. While some churchgoers send contributions by mail, many prefer to place donations in collection baskets each Sunday during worship services.

All public celebrations of Mass throughout the Archdiocese of Newark are temporarily suspended during the crisis, and the archdiocese and many community parishes have transitioned to livestreaming services online.

Cardinal Tobin emphasized that all donors can designate their contributions specifically to benefit their own parish, and that all monies raised will be sent directly to those churches for which they are earmarked. The archdiocese will temporarily waive its assessment (an administrative fee charged to parishes to support archdiocesan operations and ministries), and GoFundMe will charge only a small fee per donation to cover payment processing, as is typical for online fundraising platforms.

The archdiocesan-wide parish support initiative, specially focused on supporting local parishes, is the first of its kind. Cardinal Tobin hopes other dioceses and ministries will follow suit.

"The faithful may also contribute through their usual channels, such as mailed envelopes, other online giving and, especially, our Annual Appeal, which is now in progress," the cardinal said, adding that many within the archdiocese have already reached out with generous offers of support and questions about how to give. "Together we will navigate these uncharted waters, provide assistance to those in need and secure the road ahead for the Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of Newark. We are grateful for the generosity of our faithful, and we will work together in prayer to move past this and prevent the suffering of the most vulnerable among us."

To learn more and contribute online, visit [www.rcan.org/parishsupport](http://www.rcan.org/parishsupport).

For the most up-to-date resources and information about the Archdiocese of Newark's continued handling of the COVID-19 crisis, visit [www.rcan.org/covid19](http://www.rcan.org/covid19).

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Cardinal Tobin will celebrate Holy Week in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark. All Masses will be livestreamed in English as follows:

**Holy Thursday** - 7:30 p.m.

**Good Friday** - 3 p.m.

**Holy Saturday** - 8:30 p.m.

**Easter** - 12 p.m.



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# Vatican approves special 'Mass in the Time of Pandemic'

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments has approved a special "Mass in the Time of Pandemic" to plead for God's mercy and gift of strength in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Mass opens with a prayer that God would "look with compassion on the afflicted, grant eternal rest to the dead, comfort to mourners, healing to the sick, peace to the dying, strength to health care workers, wisdom to our leaders and the courage to reach out to all in love."

In a letter dated March 30, Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the congregation, and Archbishop Arthur Roche, congregation secretary, said, "In these days, during which the whole world has been gravely stricken by the COVID-19 virus," many bishops and priests have asked "to be able to celebrate a specific Mass to implore God to bring an end to this pandemic."

The congregation granted the request and provided special prayers and suggestions for the Scripture readings to be used.

The "Mass in the Time of Pandemic," the congregation said, can be celebrated on any day "except solemnities; the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter (season); days within the Octave of Easter; the commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day); Ash Wednesday;

and the days of Holy Week."

The offertory prayer for the Mass reads: "Accept, O Lord, the gifts we offer in this time of peril. May they become for us, by your power, a source of healing and peace. Through Christ our Lord."

One of the suggested Gospel readings is Mark 4:35-41, the story of the disciples in the boat on the stormy Sea of Galilee; it is the same reading Pope Francis used March 27 for his special prayer service and blessing *urbi et orbi* (to the city and the world), begging God to end the pandemic.

One of the optional first readings is Lamentations 3:17-26, which includes the lines: "I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope: The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, His mercies are not spent; they are renewed each morning, so great is His faithfulness. My portion is the Lord, says my soul, therefore will I hope in Him."

A passage from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans also could be used, proclaiming: "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but handed Him over for us all, how will He not also give us everything else along with Him?"

The new Mass ends with the "prayer over the people," which says: "O God, protector of all who hope in you, bless your people, keep them safe, defend them, prepare them, that, free from sin and safe from the enemy, they may persevere always in your love. Through Christ our Lord."



CNS photo

Pope Francis leads a prayer service in an empty St. Peter's Square at the Vatican March 27. At the conclusion of the service, the pope held the Eucharist as he gave an extraordinary blessing *urbi et orbi* (to the city and the world).



# Soup kitchen finds new ways to continue serving during crisis

By Kelly Marsicano  
Associate Publisher

With many surrounding organizations shutting its doors amid the coronavirus outbreak, St. John's Soup Kitchen in Newark remains one of the few places still open.

"We're hoping to stay open as long as we can without risking anyone's health," said Father Bismarck Chau, the pastor of St. John's Parish.

However, it's not business as usual.

"It's been complicated trying to adjust and find a good way to better serve the meals," Father Chau remarked.

Typically, the soup kitchen, which serves two meals Tuesdays through Saturdays at its Mulberry Street location, operates two dining rooms—one for men and the other for women and children. Both of those indoor facilities have been closed, along with the medical clinic, out of safety precautions. Hot meals are now being distributed in containers outside the building. Guests who line up are being asked to take their meals and go.

"We're limiting exposure to people outdoors," said Peter Dobbs, the director of the soup kitchen. "We bag everything and hand it off as they go. We're trying to reduce the lines and crowds."

"They don't seem worried," Father Chau said regarding the guests' concerns about the disease. "They are very grateful that we are still serving."

So far, food donations have continued to come in, thanks to help from the surrounding community.

"We've been blessed," Father Chau stated. "A lot of restaurants gave us a lot of their vegetables and meat. We are good for now."

Dobbs noted that much of the food came from establishments required to shut down their indoor seating per the state's order and didn't want their food to go to waste. Over time, he said he thinks those donations will start to diminish.

He also said the number of volunteers has decreased over concerns about COVID-19, but there are still people able to come and help. One of those people is Peter Striker.

"Where else are they going to get food?" he noted.

Striker, a retiree who used to work in the pharmaceutical business, has been volunteering at the soup kitchen for the past 6 or 7 years. He comes once a week on Thursdays, and picks up bread, cakes and donuts from an area ShopRite that serves as a donor of supplies. Striker also helps prepare coffee and serve meals. He said he does it as a way to "give something

back to society."

"About 90 to 95 percent of them are really appreciative," he said. "It makes you feel really great. They're really a great bunch of people."

"They've always been appreciative," added fellow volunteer Dave Strader. "That level of appreciation has only increased. It's amazing how much of a positive response you can get just by offering a smile or telling someone, 'Good morning,' or showing them some respect. Having an opportunity to do that really brings back tremendous dividends."

Strader has served as a volunteer for the past 20 years. A retired physician, he said he's used to "interacting with people who might be contagious," so he has yet to change his efforts. "The need is greater than ever," he remarked. "All of us who volunteer there recognize the need for food, companionship and social services that our population is lacking. That hasn't changed with the pandemic."

Striker agreed that he isn't concerned with continuing to volunteer during this time of great need. He explained that the organization is taking extra precautions to keep staff and volunteers safe. "I haven't worried about it too much. Everyone is wearing gloves. Everyone is wearing a mask," he said.

"We don't require anyone to come. It's their choice," Dobbs stated. "We have gloves and masks. We're doing our best, keeping it clean and sanitized."

The soup kitchen also recently received a boost from the City of Newark's



Advocate file photo

Department of Health and Community Wellness in the form of several dozen masks.

"I am thankful (to them) for considering our services at St. John's Soup Kitchen essential to our community and supplying us with masks as protective measures for our staff and volunteers," Father Chau said. He added that he's also grateful for the commitment of all

of the volunteers.

"I'm really thankful for the volunteers that would like to be there and can't. I'm glad they're taking precaution. I'm happy for those who take the risk. There's a sense of solidarity in the concerns from the volunteers. It's been really amazing," he said.

If you would like to donate to St. John's Soup Kitchen, visit [www.njsk.org](http://www.njsk.org).

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# 'It is important that they see us': Pastors reflect on preaching during pandemic

By Melissa McNally  
Editor

As faithful around the world adapt to the new normal of social distancing, pastors across the Archdiocese of Newark are livestreaming Masses and finding creative ways to engage their congregations while parishes remain closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

St. Helen Parish in Westfield had already been livestreaming Masses as the church building undergoes reconstruction. Originally devised as a way for parishioners to celebrate while their beloved church is being repaired, the technology now comforts the community during these difficult times.

"It's simple, but it is a way to stay connected," said current pastor, Bishop-elect Michael Saporito. "It is important that they see us—that parishioners see their priest at their usual church, especially for the elderly and vulnerable who feel isolated. (The livestream) gives parishioners a little bit of normalcy and it is a great way to stay connected. It connects people to their parish."

St. Helen's is streaming daily Mass at 9 a.m. on YouTube, and upwards of 100 people tune into the Sunday Mass, which goes live at 9:30 a.m.

Bishop-elect Saporito explained that, for him, celebrating Mass is "very interactive," and having the pews empty is a stark change. "From an energy standpoint, it is different," he explained.

Father Canon Andrew Ostaszewski, pastor of St. Casimir Parish in Newark, agreed. "While Jesus Christ is present in church and in the Eucharist, having an empty church while celebrating Mass brings sadness," he described. "For a priest, it is very important

to have contact with people, since contact builds trust, which leads to spiritual influence in parishioners accepting the teachings of Christ and instilling in their daily lives."

St. Casimir began livestreaming Masses over three months ago at the advice of a parish friend, who sponsored the equipment for the initiative. The parish livestreams Sunday Masses in English at 9:30 a.m. and in Polish at 11 a.m. on YouTube. Daily Mass, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a Divine Mercy chaplet are also being streamed.

"Praying with our families strengthens us, unites us and gives us wisdom thanks to the Word of God," Father Ostaszewski said.

Father Paul Donohue, M.C.C.J., pastor of St. Lucy Parish in Newark, described himself as "a bit of an extrovert." His parish broadcasts Sunday Masses in English and Spanish on Facebook Live. "I draw energy from seeing people and speaking with them," he explained.

Father Donohue shared that the number of people who now watch Sunday Mass has increased.

"People sent me messages thanking me for the livestream. Last Sunday, 918 people viewed it on Facebook Live. That's more than we can fit in our church," he stated.

Father John Paladino, pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Scotch Plains, has been ahead of the curve. The parish has livestreamed Masses on Facebook since its church was renovated eight years ago and cameras were installed.

Livestreaming worked for the younger parishioners, but many of the older members of the community had difficulty with the technology. Father Paladino said he got in touch with the local television station to broadcast Mass on Sunday. Now, the station



Submitted photo

Bishop-elect Michael Saporito, pastor of St. Helen Parish in Westfield, livestreamed Mass on March 15. Since the church is under construction, Mass has been taking place in the parish center gym since November 2018.

broadcasts daily Mass, along with Stations of the Cross and the recitation of the rosary.

"We are all experiencing uncertainty, but I remind all the parishioners that we must rely more deeply on God," Father Paladino said. "We must be more loving to the people around us. We have the opportunity to sit and do nothing but be in the presence of God."

Like most parish priests, Father Paladino noted that he came to the realization he missed the congregation. "There is a sense of absence," he said. "You look out to the pews and you know who used to sit there."

To combat the feeling of loneliness and isolation within the parish community, St. Bartholomew instituted a "buddy system" where younger parishioners call to check up on the older parishioners.

"Although separated for now, together we can remain in the Lord through our prayerful solidarity and by relying on our baptismal gifts of faith, hope and love," Father Paladino shared in his message to parishioners on St. Bartholomew's website.

St. John the Evangelist Parish in Bergenfield only began livestreaming after Masses were suspended indefinitely. Now the parish streams daily Mass in English and Spanish.

"(The parish staff) got this working in a couple of days," explained Msgr. Richard Arnholds, pastor of St. John's. "We are livestreaming on Facebook and Instagram, reaching out to people of all different generations. Reading the comments on the different platforms, you can see it means so much for them to see their own priests in a familiar setting. It really resonated with them."

Msgr. Arnholds admitted that serving the faithful during such an uncertain time is difficult. "Priests are as much in the dark as anyone else" with regards to the pandemic and the ever-changing safety precautions, he said.

"It's easy to say, 'Be not afraid,'" Msgr.

Arnholds stated, adding that people must trust that God will lead them through. "Even in the midst of all this, we know that there's something more beyond this."

Although the world has been upended by the crisis and it has upended the season of Lent, many priests said it provides an opportunity for introspection and for Catholics to renew their relationship with God.

"Prayer strengthens our spiritual life and unites us with God and each other," said Father Ostaszewski. "Catholics should not be afraid. We need to believe more in the presence of God in our lives. We should learn not to just rely on ourselves but also on God, and we need to place our trust in the Lord, because He cares for us. We need to have more hope based on God."

"I am a firm believer that the Lord is walking with us, but it takes us time to realize it, little by little," added Father Donohue. "As we go through this experience, we will slowly come to realize that Jesus is walking with us and guiding us."

Bishop-elect Saporito noted that even though the faithful are not able to be together, faith still remains. "It is important to remind parishioners that we love them and that we are praying for them," he said.

Celebrating the Easter Triduum without being able to congregate will also be a challenge, but pastors are looking for creative ways to mark the occasion.

"It is still Easter, even if we cannot gather together. The event still happened, Jesus is still risen, and it doesn't take away from that reality," explained Father Saporito.

In his message to parishioners, Father Paladino reminded them that despite the obstacles ahead, the Church's presence remains constant. "For a time, we will not be able to be around the Lord's table together," he stated. "Nevertheless, we are always connected."

For a full list of parishes and their livestreaming schedules, visit [www.rcan.org/parish-mass-livestreams/videos](http://www.rcan.org/parish-mass-livestreams/videos).



Advocate photo-Jai Agnash

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., livestreamed Mass from the chapel of the Archdiocesan Center in Newark March 22.



# Celebrating Holy Week and Easter at home: Finding light in the darkness

While public celebrations of Holy Week and Easter have been suspended, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., and pastors throughout the Archdiocese of Newark are planning virtual celebrations for the faithful. Though this isn't the same as gathering with our fellow brothers and sisters, it does provide an opportunity to approach the central feasts of our faith more fully and intentionally than usual. We can still find meaningful ways to commemorate and celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

## How to get the most out of Mass online

Spend some time determining which Mass may be most appropriate for your household. You can find a comprehensive list of parishes throughout the archdiocese that are livestreaming Masses by visiting [www.rcan.org/parish-mass-livestreams/videos](http://www.rcan.org/parish-mass-livestreams/videos).

- Set up a space in your home for prayer/worship. Consider covering a table with a tablecloth or another nice cloth of the seasonal liturgical color. Place a Bible, a candle and a cross or crucifix on the table.
- Straighten the space and arrange enough furniture for all.
- Have everyone go to the bathroom, get drinks, wash faces and come prepared to attend the Mass.
- Turn off and remove all devices that can distract from the space.
- Remind everyone that we do not kneel and perform the ritual gestures of Mass while we are watching it, since this does not take the place of attending Mass, but everyone should attend to it prayerfully and make a spiritual Communion.
- Before the Mass begins, light the candle.

## What is spiritual Communion?

Spiritual Communion is the practice of desiring union with Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist. It is used primarily by individuals who cannot receive holy Communion, such as the ill, the divorced and remarried, and those who have not yet been received into full communion with the Church. St. Thomas Aquinas described it as "an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the most holy sacrament and lovingly embrace Him" at a time or in circumstances when we cannot receive Him in sacramental Communion.

## Act of spiritual Communion

My Jesus,  
I believe that you are  
present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
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.



For more guidelines on Holy Week, visit [www.rcan.org/archdiocese-newark-issues-guidelines-holy-week](http://www.rcan.org/archdiocese-newark-issues-guidelines-holy-week). Additional resources can be found at [www.rcan.org/covid19](http://www.rcan.org/covid19).

# Outbreak not stopping Catholic Charities from helping the homeless

By Kayla Gelman

While many people in New Jersey are staying home during the COVID-19 pandemic, hundreds are still sleeping on the streets or in shelters. Each night, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark provides housing for 350 people across 16 facilities, including its emergency shelters, transitional residences, group homes, supportive housing and a psychiatric community home. All of Catholic Charities' shelters and residences are open and full. Individuals and families who are homeless are understandably concerned. Given the nature of the close quarters, one positive case could cause the virus to spread rapidly through its shelters.

In response, Catholic Charities has implemented aggressive cleaning protocols in all of these programs. The facilities are sanitized three times a day, with particular attention to commonly touched surfaces like doorknobs, stair railings and countertops. Shelter directors are communicating clearly with all residents about protocols and the measures in place to protect them and the staff from spreading the virus. Social distancing is strongly encouraged and enforced, and clients eat their meals in shifts to allow more spacing in the dining room. In each facility, there are designated areas or rooms where people can isolate if they show symptoms and test positive for the virus.

Residents have been extremely cooperative in implementing safety measures and adhering to the new rules. More than ever, it is a scary time to be unhoused. Individuals are operating without a safety net and without a support system. Clients in the shelters are having their temperature monitored on a daily basis. Should anyone have a high temperature, they will be quarantined away from the larger population and the Department of Health will be notified for further instructions. Of course, staff will continue to provide each person with the care they need, whether in hospital or isolation.

Shelter staff members are truly admirable at the front lines of this crisis. They have been counseling clients through the stress and anxiety of this unprecedented time. However, they are operating on a skeleton crew as some staff have needed to self-isolate. Agency employees are being cross-trained to ensure that all of the shelters have 24/7 coverage in case staff get sick. All staff are being provided with personal protective equipment, including gloves, N95 masks and goggles, although these supplies are limited.

The director of housing has concerns about all supply levels—personal protective equipment, thermometers, cleaning supplies and even food as the weeks pass. Right now, cleaning supplies are running low. The food supply is currently adequate, but staff have been monitoring daily to see what is available. As it is, all of the shel-

ters are underfunded by the government. They are in deficit and this crisis will only increase the deficit. Catholic Charities is asking the greater community to help its unhoused population.

"During this time of great uncertainty, things feel chaotic and unstable. However, one thing remains the same, and that is the love and support of our community," said John Westervelt, chief executive offi-

cer of Catholic Charities. "We are so grateful for our staff, who are working tirelessly to provide for those most in need. We are deeply appreciative of our friends, our funders, our donors and all those who are praying for us at this time. We ask for your continued support and we strongly ask that, if you are blessed enough, you would please consider making a donation of supplies or money to help support our housing programs."

Visit [www.ccannj.com/donate-now.php](http://www.ccannj.com/donate-now.php) to learn how you can help.

Kayla Gelman is a grants specialist for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark.



Photo courtesy of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark



# Catholic schools rise to the challenge of remote learning

By Christine Lombardo and Ann Oro

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Newark found they were conveniently already prepared to face many of the difficulties an extended school closure could create. As has been seen all over social media in the last few weeks, students, their families and their teachers have all risen to the challenges the pandemic has posed when it comes to continuing instruction from their homes. With guidance from the Office of Catholic Schools, school principals, technology integrators and teachers across all grade levels have effectively rolled out the largest distance learning initiative the archdiocese has ever seen.

## Building a technology infrastructure for learning

Nearly seven years ago, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Margaret Dames anticipated the growing need for technology expertise in our schools. With the support of the archdiocese, the Schools Office responded to this need by creating the director of Instructional Technology. Since then, all elementary schools have designated a technology or classroom teacher to serve as the technology integration specialist. These specialists have worked diligently to bring each school to the forefront of technology implementation and to support learning by arming teachers with digital tools and strategies. At the secondary level, schools have their own technology directors who have a similar function.

Seven years ago, only a handful of schools used tools like Google Classroom, Edmodo, Canvas, ClassDojo or Seesaw. Now, it is likely that one or more teachers regularly use these tools, and almost every elementary and high school has a learning hub like Google Classroom set up school wide.

## Shift from in-person to at-home schooling

Students and their teachers had about a week's notice to mobilize existing resources in support of a fully remote teacher and learning environment. With numerous tools at their disposal, school administrators led their communities by selecting the specific tools and "environment" for remote and e-learning at their respective schools.

Numerous schools held teacher workshops covering the basic skills students would need to learn effectively at home before fully transitioning to online instruction. Many teachers held in-class practice sessions so their students would know what to expect at home. All in all, the initiative has not been without some bumps along the way, but, thus far, has been overwhelmingly successful. And while on the surface, working from home might seem like a convenience, teachers have found themselves working as many as 12 hours each day, as they revise traditional plans to fit digital environments, provide individu-

alized support to students and their families, assist with troubleshooting technical issues and reassure students as they adapt to new routines.

In advance, principals surveyed families to anticipate any obstacles to internet access. They also learned how many devices were in the home and which students had access only to cell phones with limited data plans. In response, many principals have loaned equipment to families and have even personally delivered replacement devices to family homes when personal equipment was broken or insufficient.

## Promoting community, even from a distance

Our Catholic faith values have always been a strategic part of how we teach students to conduct themselves in online spaces. Students learn to honor their parents in the way they behave online, which includes adhering to when and how to use devices. As an extension, they honor their teachers and fellow students when they speak respectfully and honestly in digital spaces, remembering always that everyone is a child of God. Spiritual development remains an equally important aspect of student learning, with schools using Zoom conferences for religious events, such as saying the rosary as a school or participating in the Stations of the Cross.

The Schools Office has supported teachers and principals—and, in turn, school families—through three private Facebook groups: two for teachers (across early childhood and K-12) and one for principals. Each group is used to share what is working and any concerns that have arisen. Through these social media communities, archdiocesan educators have been able to talk through their ideas and concerns, benefit from the insights of others and boost their own spirits for the benefit of the families they serve.

Together with other Schools Office personnel, Ann Oro, assistant superintendent for Union County and Instructional Technology, has led three one-hour, once weekly Zoom conferences where faculty and principals/administrators are invited to continue learning together. The first early childhood conference, co-hosted with Gloria Castucci, director for Early Childhood Education, was so in demand that the workshop reached the Zoom platform's maximum capacity. These conferences are also recorded and shared for later viewing. Eileen O'Neill, director for Special Education Services, has been working to provide teachers and principals with strategies and supports to differentiate instruction for students with differing learning needs. Our assistant and associate superintendents have also held weekly Zoom meetings with their schools to share what is working, their concerns and important issues.

## Lessons learned

Barbara Dolan, acting superintendent of schools, continues to report the positive

feedback she has received from individual principals who have been overwhelmed with positive feedback from their families. At the same time, we all recognize the ongoing commitment that a successful remote learning initiative demands of both our educators and our families. As we approach the Easter holiday, we look forward to culminating this Lenten sea-

son with a celebration of the resurrection of Christ and a renewal of hope for what is to come (as well as a welcome break for teachers and students).

*Christine Lombardo is director for School Enrollment and Marketing/Communication; Ann Oro is assistant superintendent for Union County and Instructional Technology.*



Submitted photos





# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK 2019–2018

April 2020

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

**N**early 18 months ago, I reaffirmed our Archdiocese's commitment to action and transparency in the face of the serious challenges facing our Church.

*The Archdiocese of Newark must respond to the faithful's need for increased transparency, careful stewardship, and accountability for their contributions of the mission of the Church. This Statement of Accountability represents an important step in our ongoing efforts to heal the Body of Christ.*

*This Archdiocese hereby restates its commitment to the faithful of this local Church: 1) To work tirelessly, with the support of God's people and in cooperation with civil authorities, to protect all those entrusted to our care, most especially the young and vulnerable, from all forms of abuse, by continuing our efforts to create safe and respectful environments for all. 2) To use funds from the Annual Appeal or We Are Living Stones Capital Campaign solely for the purposes originally intended—to proclaim the Good News, pass on the faith to the next generation, and care for the poor and marginalized—and not for any other purpose. Information regarding these campaigns may be obtained on our website, [www.rcan.org](http://www.rcan.org). 3) To inform and communicate regularly with the faithful on how these funds are used to serve the needs of God's people throughout the Archdiocese of Newark (2018 Statement of Accountability).*

I am deeply grateful to archdiocesan and parish leaders in all four counties of our Archdiocese for their renewed commitment to responsible stewardship of all funds entrusted to our care by the faithful people who give so generously to carry out Christ's work here in northern New Jersey and beyond. As the above Statement of Accountability indicates, I intend to do all I can to restore justice, promote healing, and enact structures of accountability and transparency—including financial accountability and transparency—within the Archdiocese of Newark. It is my commitment to build on new efforts and to continue to improve upon them.

Following is a summary of the finances of the Archdiocese of Newark at the conclusion of the last two fiscal years ending June 30, 2019 and 2018, respectively. In order to enhance transparency and accountability, the Archdiocese publishes its audited financial statements on its website. Grant Thornton, LLP, an independent certified public accounting firm, audits the Archdiocese's financial statements each year for the purpose of expressing an opinion on our financial statements. This financial information is available online at [www.rcan.org](http://www.rcan.org) under the "About Us" tab.

Grant Thornton, L.L.P., a nationally renowned accounting firm, audited this fiscal information following generally accepted accounting principles. The firm issued an unqualified or "clean" opinion that declares the financial information it examined presents "fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position" of the Chancery Office.

Contributions that form the basis for this report come from three principal sources: The Annual Appeal, special gifts from the *We Are Living Stones* capital campaign, and parish assessments.

In his Message for Lent 2020, Pope Francis writes:

*Today too, there is a need to appeal to men and women of good will to share, by almsgiving, their goods with those most in need, as a means of personally participating in the building of a better world. Charitable giving makes us more human, whereas hoarding risks making us less human, imprisoned by our own selfishness (Message for Lent 2020).*

Your generosity supports a broad range of ministries, including the formation of the next generation of Catholic leaders, health care and social services, evangelization and pastoral outreach, and a variety of other parish-based initiatives. Both the income and expenditures reflect the deep commitment of the faithful who support this local Church. The Archdiocese of Newark is blessed with many faithful stewards who continue to give of their time, talent, and treasure. We are deeply grateful for their stewardship.

The Archdiocesan Center exists to serve the needs of the people of this Archdiocese. We are committed to the bold proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, ongoing faith and sacramental formation, and service to the poor and those on the margins.

May Mary, our Mother, strengthen our resolve to be faithful stewards of God's gifts.

Sincerely in Christ the Redeemer,

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark





ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK CHANCERY OFFICE

## CONDENSED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2019 and 2018

## ASSETS

	2019	2018
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 23,775,858	\$ 25,757,590
Accounts and loans receivable, net	12,719,572	13,464,888
Contributions receivable, net	4,710,831	8,211,495
Prepaid expenses and other assets	1,264,030	1,602,881
Mortgage receivable	2,950,110	2,067,595
Investments	546,618,360	506,435,893
Property and equipment, net	30,420,231	32,007,375
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 622,458,992</b>	<b>\$ 589,547,717</b>

STATEMENTS OF  
ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES  
IN NET ASSETS

	2019	2018
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS:</b>		
Operating support and revenue	\$ 46,328,986	\$ 50,851,713
Operating expenses	<u>63,671,332</u>	<u>54,249,618</u>
Change in net assets without donor restrictions from operations	(17,342,346)	(3,397,905)
Non operating revenue	16,780,092	2,176,329
Gain on Sale of Properties	910,839	1,381,030
Reclassification	<u>1,595,998</u>	<u>-</u>
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	1,944,583	159,454
Change in net assets with donor restrictions	6,489,109	3,566,068
Change in net assets	8,433,692	3,725,522
Net assets, beginning of the year	<u>266,359,411</u>	<u>262,633,889</u>
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF THE YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 274,793,103</b>	<b>\$ 266,359,411</b>

LIABILITIES AND NET  
ASSETS

	2019	2018
<b>LIABILITIES:</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 7,317,964	\$ 6,821,175
Accrued subsidies to affiliates	4,212,136	2,483,366
Amounts due to affiliates - campaign activities	416,716	426,805
Obligations due under split-interest agreements	699,017	682,274
Custodial Funds	332,918,754	310,792,325
Conditional assets retirement obligations	2,101,302	1,982,361
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 347,665,889</b>	<b>\$ 323,188,306</b>
<b>NET ASSETS:</b>		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 86,816,166	\$ 84,871,583
With Donor Restrictions	187,976,937	181,487,828
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 274,793,103</b>	<b>\$ 266,359,411</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 622,458,992</b>	<b>\$ 589,547,717</b>

STATEMENTS OF  
CASH FLOWS

	2019	2018
Net cash provided by operating activities	\$ 13,739,611	\$ 23,453,154
Net cash used in investing activities	(15,736,398)	(23,783,403)
Cash flow provided by financing activities	15,055	237,627
Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents	(1,981,732)	(92,622)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	25,757,590	25,850,212
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	<b>\$ 23,775,858</b>	<b>\$ 25,757,590</b>
Supplemental Data:		
Mortgage receivable received from sale of property	<b>\$ 910,940</b>	<b>\$ 1,360,000</b>

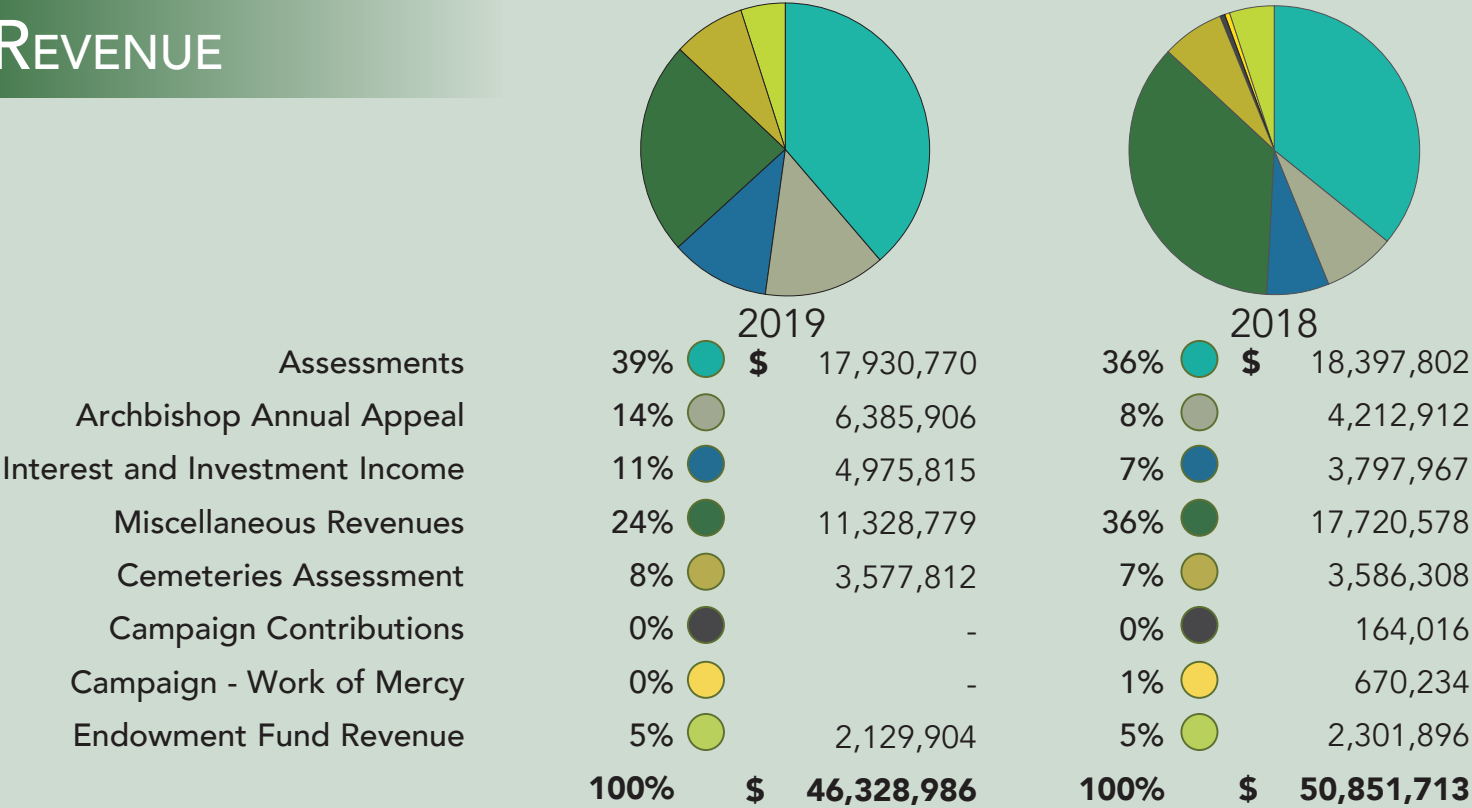


ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK CHANCERY OFFICE

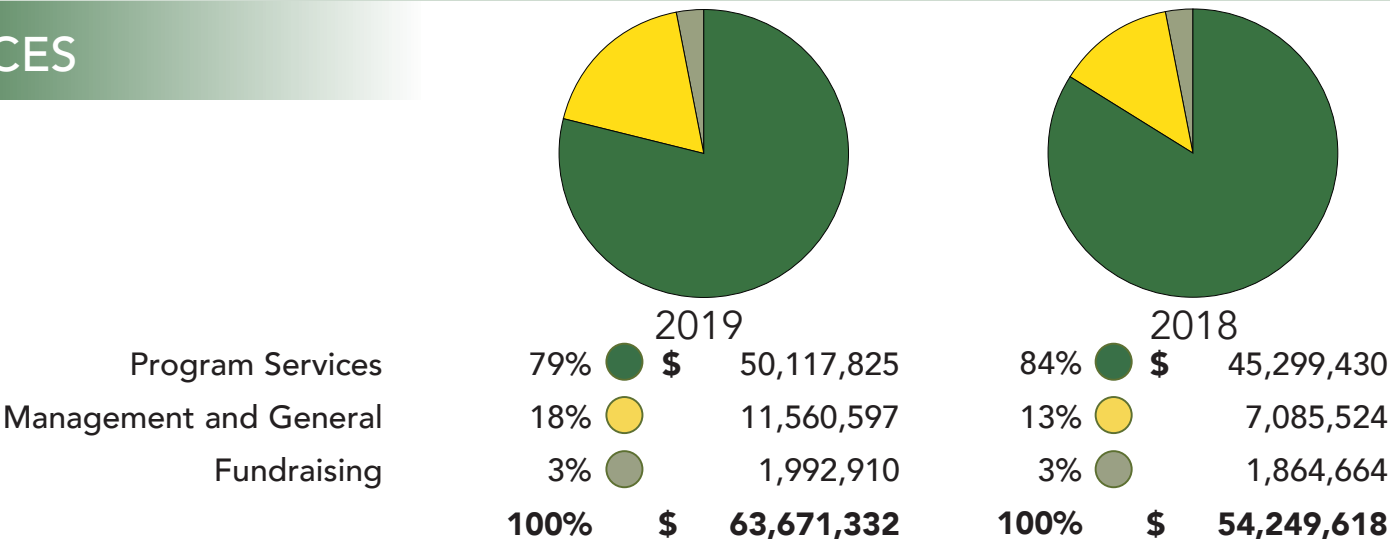
CONDENSED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2019 and 2018

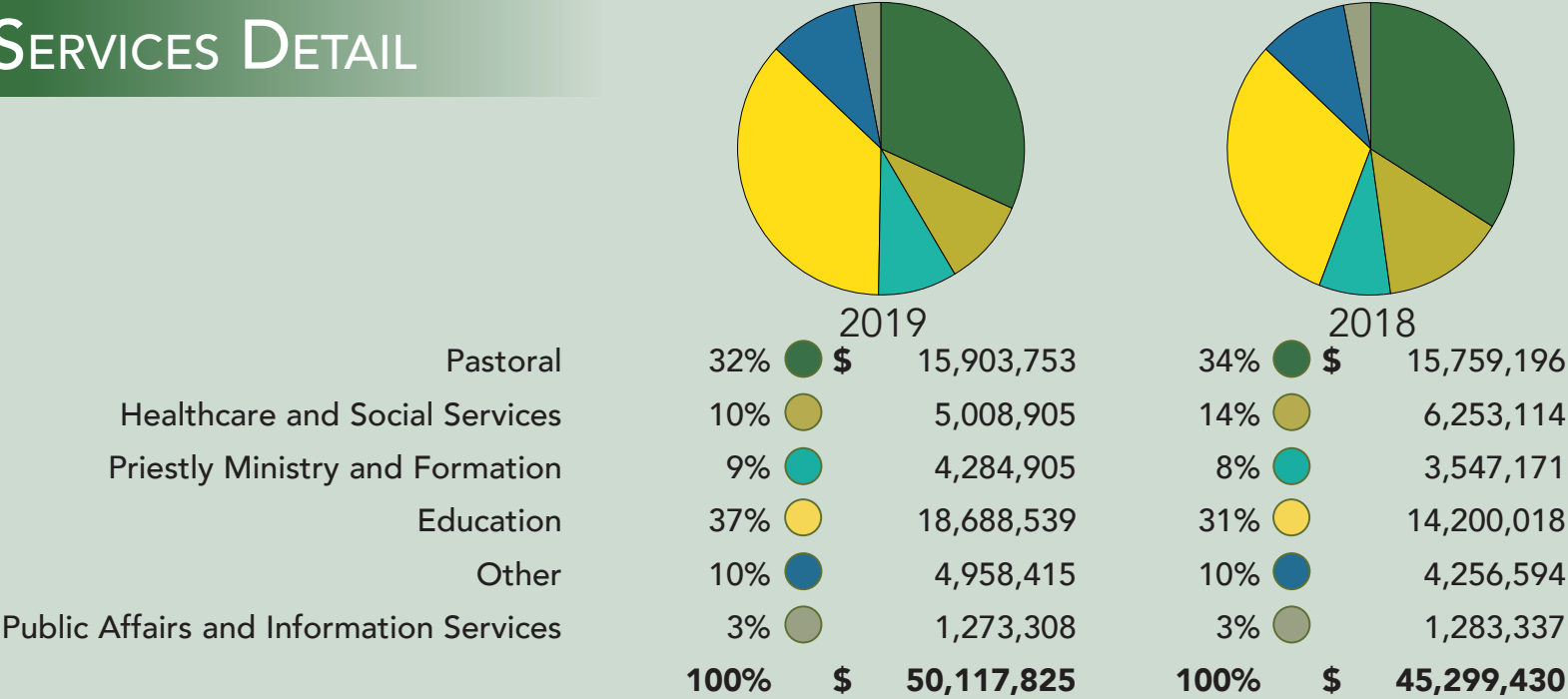
SUPPORT AND REVENUE



OPERATING SERVICES



PROGRAM SERVICES DETAIL

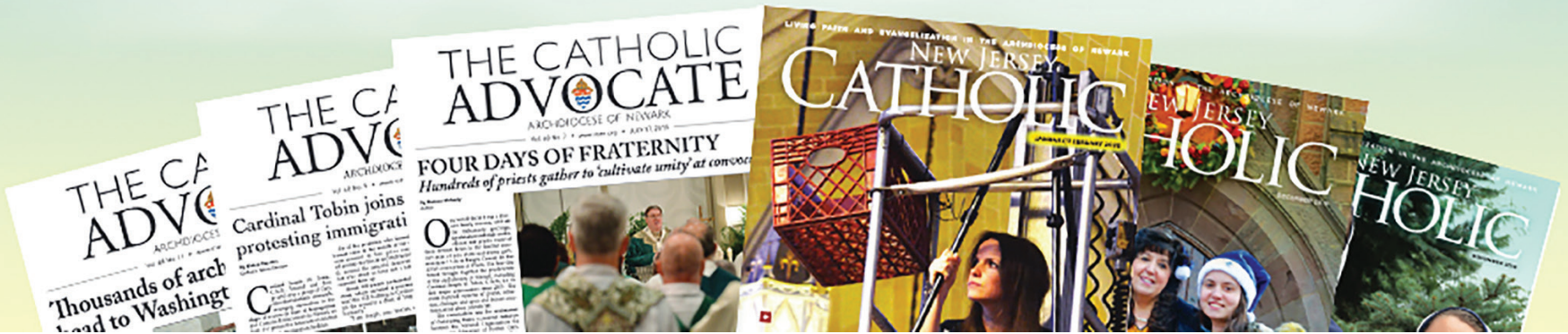








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# Parish responds to crisis by creating a new ministry

By Kelly Marsicano  
Associate Publisher

At Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in South Orange, a new ministry has been born out of the coronavirus crisis. It's called Homebound Connections. It started with parishioners simply wanting to help fellow parishioners.

"This coronavirus has made everyone more alert. We all want to do something," said Sister Mary Selina, S.C.C., the pastoral associate at the parish.

Parishioner Joan Delaloye said her first concern was for those from her parish who are homebound or sick and can't get out for groceries. That's when she called Sister Mary, who then provided her with a list of about a dozen names.

"I called everybody," Delaloye said. "There were people who were so happy that they got the call. They gave me a list of items they needed."

Other parishioners who expressed an interest to help then took care of running the errands and delivering the items.

Delaloye said she followed up with those who were assisted to make sure everything worked out. She recalled one woman with COPD being especially thankful because she desperately needed distilled water for her breathing apparatus. "If that wasn't the Holy Spirit (at work)," Delaloye stated.

Sister Mary said she spoke to the same

woman. "She called to say how grateful she was that this was being coordinated, grateful that they showed their care from the parish," sister said.

The new ministry is quickly expanding beyond physical needs; it's also providing spiritual needs. Sister Mary is sending emails containing prayers to the sick and homebound, other parishioners are making cards, and even choir members are eager to sing for them over the phone.

"What a way to bring some sunshine. Music is powerful," said Delaloye, who has a background in social work and education. "People need connections, to not feel so isolated, (to know) someone is out there, someone cares, and coming from your parish is that much more meaningful to them."

"Physical needs are very important, but emotional and spiritual needs are also vital," she continued.

"The idea is simply that the church is here to serve you," said Father Brian Needles, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows. "We recognize that so many of our parishioners are alone and can't necessarily leave the house, especially at this time. We, therefore, really want them to see the church as a source of assistance, encouragement and hope. I've been inspired by members of our parish who have volunteered to become engaged in this new ministry. I guess one welcome consequence of the corona-



Advocate file photo

virus is that it has made us see and respond to a previously unmet need in our parish."

The hope is that the Homebound Connections ministry will continue to grow during these difficult times, and the plan is for it to continue even after the crisis ends.

"We realize in a great way how important it is. I think we've come to love one another better," reflected Sister Mary.

"When this is over, I hope to say hello to these people and get to know them a little," Delaloye said.

## 'Quarantined Catholics' keeps college students engaged

By Melissa McNally  
Editor

Just as students and faculty from Montclair State University were enjoying spring break, a global pandemic became local.

Due to COVID-19, the university shifted to online learning for the rest of the year, and students living on campus were forced to evacuate, except for a few who lived out of state with nowhere else to go.

As chaplain and director of the Newman Catholic Center on campus, Father Jim Chern felt challenged to think of a way to keep the young adults of the college community spiritually engaged.

"If all the students are home, they'll just binge Netflix," Father Chern thought. "Isolation is not healthy for anyone, spiritually or emotionally."

Throughout the year, the Newman Center holds several activities, including daily Bible studies, Masses and weekly Newman Nights, where student leaders or staff members facilitate a discussion between students on a particular topic.

To help keep students connected, the center began livestreaming daily Mass from its chapel and emailing newsletters. Father Chern noted that Catholics and people of any faith struggle with being alone. "We're community-minded. Sunday Mass is so essential because there's something valuable about gathering together in faith," he said.

The staff then created an innovative solution to their canceled Newman Nights. "We recognized that we needed to be creative to show our students that we care for them and their spiritual formation," said Megan Callaghan, team director of FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) at Montclair State University.

The team decided to produce a talk show on Facebook Live. "I threw out the name 'Quarantined Catholics' as kind of a joke," Callaghan said. The name stuck and Callaghan agreed to cohost the show with fellow missionary Daniel Robinson.

Callaghan, who is in her second year as a staff member at the Newman Center, had experience leading group discussions and agreed to host.

The featured topic for the pilot episode

was "Grill Your Chaplain." "We try to keep things light while keeping the students faithful," Father Chern explained.

"We wanted to show people that we are still a community," Callaghan said. "People are really hungry for good content in the midst of isolation and social distancing. We are made to be in relationship with God and with each other."

The first two episodes of "Quarantined Catholics" had thousands of views, and the Newman Center's Facebook page has seen a huge uptick in views. All of the digital outreach seems to be bringing students together, Father Chern said.

"I've gotten comments from people who are grateful that not everything in their lives has come to a halt," he explained. "We have to give students something to hold on to during this crisis."

The talk show's impact reaches beyond the Montclair community. "I'm getting messages from people from other parts of the country who are sharing 'Quarantined Catholics' with each other. That's really cool," Father Chern noted.

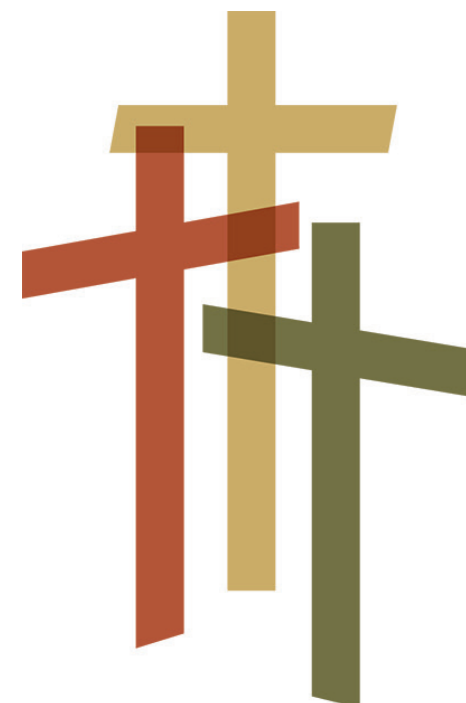
Callaghan said she sent the link to her friends in Texas. "On an average Newman Night, we'll get 20-30 people participating. On the first episode of 'Quarantined Catholics,' we had 40-55 people who watched the whole thing live," she explained.

The staff decides on a topic on a week-to-week basis, hoping to engage young adult viewers from around the globe who

may feel disconnected in this uncertain time.

"We are being forged by fire right now," Callaghan said. "We could come out stronger. This period of social distancing requires some spiritual discipline, and we now have the time to focus on our spiritual life. I think this is a great time for hope. I feel like great saints will be formed."

"Quarantine Catholics" livestreams Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. at [www.facebook.com/redhawkcatholic](http://www.facebook.com/redhawkcatholic).





# What's the right way for Church leaders to respond to the coronavirus outbreak?

By Daniel Conway

The Catholic Church's response to COVID-19 reflects a both/and perspective. On the one hand, we must act out of an abundance of caution in order to protect the health and well-being of everyone. On the other hand, in these most challenging times, we place our trust in the healing power of God, and, in the final analysis, we turn to Him alone. As a result, the pope and our bishops and pastors must guide us in both trusting God and respecting the decisions of civil authorities and medical professionals.

The worldwide crisis we are experiencing now presents our Church with unprecedented challenges. On the one hand, the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday is sacred. For people who are healthy enough to participate, the graces received through participation in the holy Eucharist are needed now more than ever as we confront this personal and global crisis. On the other hand, the common

good of all requires that the virus be contained and that we eliminate the public health risks presented by large gatherings of people.

As a result, bishops around the world have suspended public celebrations of the liturgy, closed schools and canceled church activities. These unprecedented steps are being taken out of an abundance of caution and with profound respect for the health and safety of all, but these decisions remain controversial.

Some argue it's a mistake to restrict access to the grace of the Eucharist during this critical time. Others, including Pope Francis, worry that efforts, while often necessary, to contain the spread of this virus will cause us to turn inward and neglect those who are most in need of our care and assistance. That's why the Vatican has repeatedly assured the world community of the Holy See's continuing support for health care professionals and facilities in various parts of the world, especially in very remote areas in great

difficulty, trusting in the active solidarity of all.

In his homily for the Third Sunday of Lent, livestreamed from the Archdiocesan Center as a means of making the Sunday Eucharist available in spite of the pandemic, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., observed that:

"Far from being an act of self-preservation, social distancing only makes sense if it is an act of solidarity. The coronavirus teaches a harsh lesson: we are connected to each other, whether we like it or not. Individually, we can run but we cannot hide. Movie stars and political leaders are just as vulnerable as the elderly and children.

"A fundamental recognition of this shared fragility is to work together to hinder the spread of the pandemic. The experience of other countries has demonstrated convincingly that the worse response to COVID-19 is to pretend that it does not exist or to believe that my world will be spared the harsh consequences of the infection.

Solidarity helps us see that a samaritan response to the challenges of this Lent will be avoiding large gatherings and washing our hands.

"As a fellow preacher observed earlier today: the data suggests that what the world needs now is not our physical presence but our absence."

The fact is the Church must make a prudent, courageous decision to both affirm the truth of God's presence and healing power and to participate in the very practical efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus by limiting public gatherings and social interactions. The both/and principle is vitally important here.

During this most difficult time in the life of our Church, and our local, state, national and global communities, it's more important than ever to observe the Lenten practices of prayer, self-denial and stewardship of all God's gifts. Let's take care of ourselves and, at the same time, care for the needs of others. Let's also pray that the wisdom of "the Catholic both/and" will guide Church leaders, and all of us, through the current darkness to the light of Christ.

*Daniel Conway is an author, publisher and freelance writer. He is a frequent contributor to Catholic publications in the United States.*

## Adjusting pastoral care amid the pandemic

By Father Stephen Fichter

The word coronavirus will be forever a word in our vocabulary that will equate with words like blitzkrieg from World War II or 9/11 from the terrorist attack of 2001. This devastating pandemic seemed to catch all of us completely by surprise. It made us realize how much we take for granted so many wonderful routines in our lives, like attendance at Mass each weekend.

In the context of Lenten sacrifices, not being able to go to church seems like the ultimate thing to give up. An imposed Eucharistic fast would have been unthinkable just a few weeks ago and now it is the reality of our pastoral lives around which we are trying to minister to our people.

Ever since Cardinal Tobin informed us of the extraordinarily sad but necessary decision to not have Eucharistic celebrations with the faithful in attendance, we at the Parish of St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Wyckoff have been truly grateful that we followed our hunch more than two years ago to install our livestreaming equipment, which allows our parishioners to continue attending Mass with us. While there are many wonderful opportunities to watch Mass on TV, countless members of our faith community have told me that seeing the familiar faces of their priests in our beautiful sanctuary and hearing our voices have brought them calm amidst all this chaos.

Thanks to this technology, we have developed an amazing online community that participates in our daily Masses at 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. and our 5 p.m. Saturday

Mass, which we three priests of the parish concelebrate along with our deacon. The Saturday evening Mass is also recorded, which allows us to post that Mass to our website for people

to see on Sunday morning. One family jokingly told me that they now look forward to their Saturday night "Mass on the couch."

Our livestreaming capability was a godsend for the Ulrich family when their beloved matriarch, Diane, who was also our trustee for many years, recently passed away. Normally, the church would have been overflowing for a funeral like that, but since at that time we had to limit the family to only nine members (this was before the no-funerals restriction was set in place), the rest of her family and hundreds of her fellow parishioners and friends all logged in to be present.

As a parish that collects and delivers a lot of food to several nonprofit organizations in Paterson on an almost daily basis, we had to develop a Plan B with a smaller crew of amazing volunteers so that our practical outreach would not suffer. However, with the government stay-at-home restrictions tighter on our activities, we had to come up with a further Plan C. Instead of asking our parishioners to drop off food bags, which is what they have been doing for years, we decided to tap into our emergency charitable fund to send these organizations larger checks than normal.

St. Elizabeth's is blessed to have an active school. Normally, I would hear the kids laughing and yelling to each other as they play kickball or basketball, but now

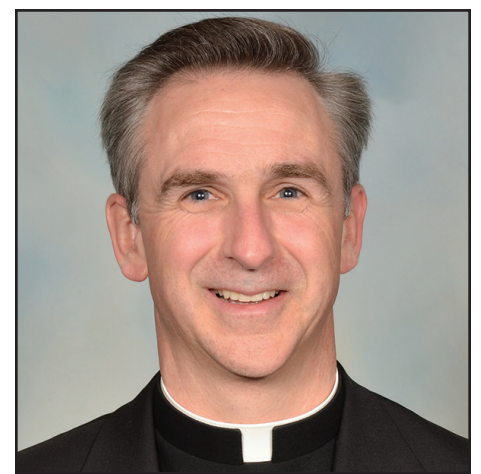
our soccer field and the parking lot look like a ghost town. And with no one arriving for Mass, the church feels very empty when we celebrate the Eucharist. We tried

to remedy that situation by asking our parishioners to send us their photos by email, which we then printed and taped to the pews so we may see their smiles as we celebrate Eucharist.

As most parish clergy do, we three priests often go to the local hospitals and nursing homes to visit our congregants and to anoint those in need. And although we understand the wisdom behind the new health care restrictions, it has felt so strange for us not to be able to get in and take care of our people. Even more surreal is officiating at a burial where only one family member and the funeral director are present. Once again, I am very grateful that we live in the age when people can record video with their phones and FaceTime with their family at moments like these. I am sure that we will have a slew of Memorial Masses when the virus subsides.

In the 34 years since I joined the seminary, to this day, I do not recall a time like this with such disruption to normal parish life. I remember the turmoil following 9/11 and the ensuing anthrax scare, but even that is so different to what we are currently experiencing. It is both disconcerting and bewildering not to be able to be with our people, to hug them, to console them in person.

On a positive note, and similar to the aftermath of 9/11, I am happy to report



that I am seeing now among our parishioners so much goodwill and concern for each other. So many people, day after day, ask if there is anything they can do to help. We have countless offers to shop and drop food off to those who cannot easily run their errands. A therapist called to let me know that she would gladly speak with parishioners on the phone. The outpouring of love is truly inspiring.

I have told our parishioners to keep two things in mind as we try to negotiate this very difficult period for all of us. The first thought is to take to heart the words that Jesus spoke so often in the Gospel: "Be not afraid." If deeply assimilated, these simple but profound words will guide us safely through this turmoil. The other verse that we have taken as our parish mantra is Romans 12:12—"Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer." I know for a fact that we will!

*Father Stephen Fichter is pastor of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Wyckoff.*



# Women in communion with Christ

By Kelly Marsicano  
Associate Publisher

Just days before the chaos of the coronavirus began, a sense of peace filled the athletic center at Seton Hall University, where some 1,200 women gathered for a day of faith and fellowship.

The annual Women's Day of Reflection was held March 7 with the theme "Alive in Christ: The Eucharist ... His Heart in My Heart." The daylong event, which featured an English and Spanish track, included keynote addresses, music, confession, Eucharistic Adoration and vendors.



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Sister Bethany Madonna, S.V., vocation director of Sisters of Life, kicked off the event on the English side with a talk on how the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Catholic faith.

"The Eucharist is Jesus truly present—body, blood, soul and divinity. It's Jesus giving Himself to us personally, individually, intimately, in a way we couldn't ever have dreamt of asking God to come to us," she told the audience.

She went on to discuss how the Eucharist assures Catholics of many truths, three in particular. "The first truth is that Jesus in the Eucharist communicates that you are deeply known and loved. The second truth is that the Eucharistic heart of Jesus is full of mercy. And the third, the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist gives you life and abundance," Sister Bethany stated.

Assuring the group of women, she reiterated that God chose each one of them and knows and loves them. "I think often as women there can be a temptation to prove to God that I do love Him and that I am good enough to be loved. To earn His love, to pay my debt to see how I can gain more love and attention and seek acknowledgement," the sister said. "But this is not what the Lord desires for us. He loves us for who we are, not what we do."

Sister Bethany, who entered the Sisters of Life in 2007 and professed final vows in 2015, also talked about the importance



of confession, saying that God makes all things new. "Confession cleanses us. Confession prepares and disposes our hearts to be able to receive Jesus in Communion," she emphasized. "And after receiving Communion, we're united to Jesus in a way that heals our wounds, in a way that gives us strength to bear all the crosses of our lives."

"Jesus says, 'I will create in you a new heart and a new spirit that you may live,'" Sister Bethany explained. "Jesus in the Eucharist knows you, loves you, draws you into mercy and fills you with the fullness of life."

Grace Aryee, a parishioner at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, attended the event for the first time. She said she went to confession, which was being offered throughout the day, and admitted noticing a difference afterwards. "I felt kind of heavy, inside and out, and when I went to confession and came out, I felt so light. I said, 'Something is going on here,' and I can feel it in me," she reflected. "I feel they should have this every week, not every year. That's how much I love it."

Michele Paolano, a parishioner at St. Mary's in Rutherford, echoed those sentiments. "I've been here the past couple of years, and I enjoy it. It's a nice, uplifting, informative, spiritual day," she said.

"Usually after this, I grow more in my spiritual journey," added Christina Eze of Our Lady of the Valley in Orange. "It helps me focus and think about what life is all about, what is more important."

Organizing an event of this nature takes several months of planning. Maureen Srinivasa, the head of the Archdiocese of Newark Women's Commission, which puts on the event, said this year precautions were taken in light of the coronavirus outbreak by providing hand sanitizers and ensuring maintenance staff remained vigilant about cleaning and disinfecting the bathrooms. The commission also followed the Mass guidelines put in place by the archdiocese at the time, including exchanging the sign of peace without physical contact and not distributing the blood of Christ.

"I think the main lesson to learn from this is life is very fragile and we need to be

ready," Srinivasa said. "And maybe that's why we're seeing such a long confession line today. People want to be right with God. They want to be at peace in their hearts and souls."

The second keynote speaker of the day, Colleen Kelly-Rayner, focused on how everyone is called to be an instrument of God's love. Kelly-Rayner is a Catholic lay evangelist and founder of CKR Retreats. She admitted to those in attendance how she used to just go through the motions before falling in love with God.

"The greatest thing we can do is fall in love with God," she said. "What you are in love with will affect everything. It will decide what gets you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything."

Kelly-Rayner also said that God has a plan for everyone, that everyone is called for greatness, and He will call each one in a different way, but one thing will remain the same. "Every single person in this room is called to be alive in Christ, to play music for Christ," she stated.

"I want you to fall in love with Him. I want you to have your heart burst open. I want you to become an instrument of God, when you receive the Eucharist, for you to walk out into the world so people can see Jesus in you," she continued.

Kelly-Rayner admitted that it's not easy to follow God and to trust in Him, but said the more you do it, the easier it gets.

"If you want Him to come alive in you, go to confession, spend time with Him. And then when you're ready—and be careful, because when you say, 'Yes, Jesus, your will not my will be done'—you should see the crazy stuff He does."

Dr. Dianne Traflet, associate dean for graduate studies and administration and assistant professor of pastoral theology at Seton Hall, gave the third and final presentation of the day before Holy Hour.

The Spanish speakers included Kathia Arango, director of the Office of Hispanic Catholics in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia; and Sidelis Rosario, associate director of the School of Evangelization in the Diocese of Brooklyn.



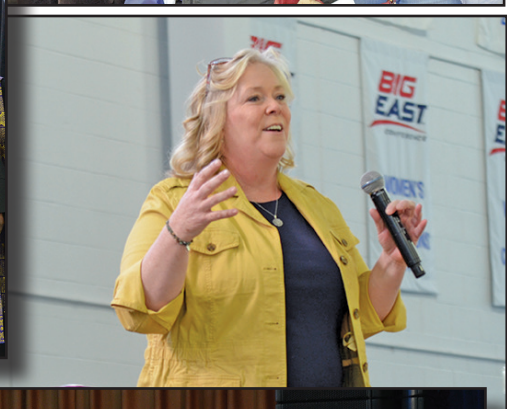
The day concluded with both sides coming together for a closing Mass with Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

"Did something good happen to you today? A word, a conversation, a moment of silence, the words of absolution?" the cardinal reflected in his homily. "If nothing good is happening yet, be patient because, in a moment, His heart will be united with your heart."

For more information on the Spanish track, see the March/April issue of *New Jersey Catholic*.











Submitted photos

The community of Paramus Catholic High School is doing its part to assist those in need during the coronavirus pandemic. Principal Stephanie Macaluso and staff recently donated 200 masks to the Paramus Police Department. Pictured in the above photo with officers are Vice Principal of Operations/School Safety Brian Niland and Director of Operations Michael Freimuth. The school also donated 600 N95 masks to Dr. John Morgan (photo at left, center) of Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck. To lift the spirits of first responders, freshman Nicholas Chromey (photo at right) created handmade thank you cards that will be distributed to police, fire and EMT workers and to people in nursing homes.



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# Jesus is the light in a broken world

By Msgr. Anselm Nwaorgu

As the impact of COVID-19 begins to unfold in all its present and future dimensions, the one thing we need right now, I believe, is some light in the darkness of this moment.

The experience of darkness seems to be all around us, one after another—mass shootings, ecological disasters, pandemics, you name it. Each darkness brings levels of brokenness—broken people, families, relationships and spirits. In short, we are living in a broken world. It is in the midst of all this brokenness that coronavirus rears its head.

To eradicate this present threat to humanity, we have responded with shutdowns and social distancing. These are very good measures that must be followed. Yet, I wonder about the new darkness and brokenness these solutions could create. A friend of mine said that it is better for him to stay outside and deal with COVID-19 than to stay at home and deal with coronavirus COVID-30—referring to his spouse. Many couples are not accustomed to spending time together in the same space, now they must do so 24/7—God have mercy. There are many single and married persons whose social lives revolve around work, church and social groups settings. Now they must stay at

home—talk about loneliness and disillusionment. Many kids are at home with no place to go and need to expend their excessive energies in very close quarters. May God deliver them from each other, and from driving their parents crazy.

I worry about the psycho-social effects of this new arrangement. The longer we stay in, the more the adverse effects will begin to manifest. Being in quarantine can result in an increase in family violence, impatience, bitterness and depression.

In the midst of all this possible brokenness and darkness, how do we respond? How do we seek and maintain hope? How do we source light? Do we sit back, fight with each other and catastrophize the future, or do we find ways to turn this adversity into opportunity? Here, the Word of God gives us hope as Jesus declares, “I am the light of the world.”

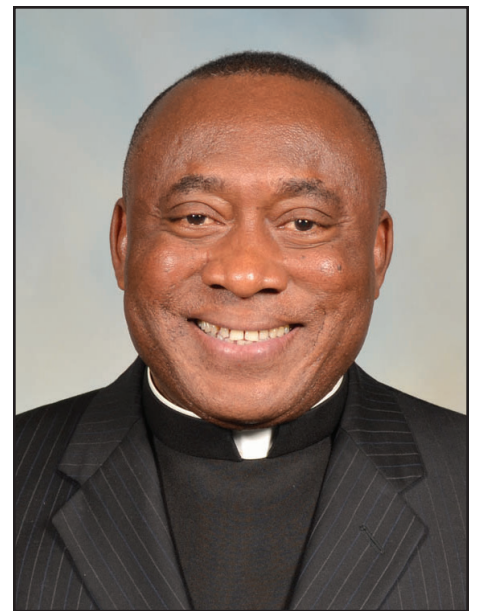
As Boy Scouts, we were taught that if you do not know your bearings and you are lost in the woods or at night, if per chance you see a glimpse of light in the distance, walk toward it. That light represents hope, it represents life and the knowledge that help is on the way. In the midst of our present darkness, there is light that we can follow—a light that can bring hope into this hopelessness, provide guidance in

this moment of confusion, bring comfort and consolation in the midst of this disillusionment, can call us to compassion and love in the present bubble of desperation. That light, that power and energy is Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Savior and our Redeemer.

If Jesus is the light of the world, then He is also the light in the darkness and brokenness of your own life. We can truly use this moment in two great ways. First, as an opportunity to reflect upon the areas of darkness in our lives—within ourselves, within the way we treat others and in how we respond to God’s call. This can be a beautiful time for personal growth.

Now is also a time to spend considering where we are in our relationship with God and Jesus Christ. The questions to ask are: Am I side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder with Jesus? What role is He playing in my life right now, in my relationships, in my endeavors and in my decisions? Is He on the periphery, or is He center stage in my life? Where am I with the spirit of forgiveness, compassion, faithfulness, generosity and patience? Remember the words of Scriptures, “Tomorrow is not a promise” for “we neither know the day nor the hour.”

The closer we are to the Lord, the closer we are to that light we desper-



ately need to remedy the darkness in our times and the darkness in our lives. The closer we are to the Lord, the more we can experience the power and deliverance that only His presence can provide. The further away we are from Him, the more vulnerable we are to the darkness. This may sound like a cliché, but it is a living truth.

Keeping Jesus close is as simple as calling His name as many times in a day as we can, invoking His presence in the environment of our life and work. When it comes to coronavirus, this too shall pass!

*Msgr. Anselm Nwaorgu is pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Union.*

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