

PASTOR'S NOTES

Spiritually navigating these 'closed down times'

Sunday will be the 11th day public Masses and church events have been closed down. Right now we are left to ponder in hope when this will pass and life return to normal. No one can give us that date or time. COVID-19 has been a powerful way of teaching us about being creatures, being finite, being dependent! We long for social interaction, for camaraderie, for the gift of others. This all confirms what God said in the beginning – **"It is not good for man to be alone"** [Genesis 2:18]. But for now all of us are being asked to live at a distance from one another.

This is not an easy walk, but one that has been done before – *the lonely walk of Jesus to his city of destiny when things were 'closing down' on him and from there to that hill called Golgotha (Calvary)*. In all of this he carried within his bosom the conviction that his Father was very near as he always is, especially for those who walk in the faith of God's undying love for the human race.

God is very near to us in these 'muddled times.' Every day the Diocese of Fargo offers televised daily and Sunday Masses and invites us to join in spiritual communion with God and others as we enter into the sacramental mystery of the Father's Beloved Son pouring himself out in sacrificial love for us as he did on Calvary and continues unabated until the end of time. This is the very gift of the sacrament of the Eucharist – *source and summit of Christian life and living*.

I would highly encourage you to make these **televised daily and Sunday Masses** a rich part of these troubled times. Some have the ability to transfer the diocesan Mass to your regular TV set. In conjunction with the Order of Sunday Mass that we have emailed, this would allow you to view the Mass as a family and join in the readings and responses and the postures of standing and sitting at the proper times. Of course you could also just use the Order of Sunday Mass apart from the televised Mass and individually make a spiritual communion with God and his people.

On the same order we have sent you the Daily Mass readings along with the various antiphons that are said at the beginning of Mass and at Communion time along with a prayer seeking spiritual communion at the time you would normally receive Communion at Mass.

In addition to the televised daily and Sunday Masses **I will be celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation (hearing Confessions)** Monday through Saturday. Since our Lenten communal Reconciliation services are being canceled, this provides opportunities for parishioners to experience God's merciful love. In order for that to be done in accord with social distancing, I will be 'hearing Confessions' in St. Leo's sacristy to the left of the altar where the Mass servers vest. There is the option to go behind the screen or face-to-face. **The schedule for Confessions at St. Leo's is: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday** from 6:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. and **Saturday** from 4 to 5 p.m. **The schedule for St. Thomas is Thursday** from 6:30 to 7 p.m. (St. Thomas' Confessional will have social distance space). At all places and all times I will stay as long as necessary, and as always people can call and set up an appointment. Critical times are especially good times to get right with the Lord who, as Pope Francis has said repeatedly, *'never tires of forgiving us of our sins'*. The sacrament of Reconciliation is that great encounter with mercy and forgiveness as we 'make straight the way of the Lord' into our lives.

Lastly our churches are open. These times present numerous opportunities for a variety of prayer forms: bring your tablets or I-phones to watch the televised Masses in the pews of our church; come and simply make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament or spend some time in adoration; come and pray the rosary as an individual or as a family; come and walk the Stations of the Cross with one of the many devotional stations prayer books at the back of the church.

In these 'closed down times' there seems to be a number of 'opportune times' to be close to God who is never far from those who know his promise *"that I am with you always, until the end of the world."* [Matthew 28:20]



St. Leo's Catholic Church
211 Langer Ave North
PO Box 340
Casselton ND
347-4609

St. Thomas Catholic Church
401 Third St. North
PO Box 22
Buffalo ND
633-5150



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT March 29, 2020

All Sunday and Daily Masses have been cancelled until further notice.

Weekend Mass Schedule for St. Leo's and St. Thomas

1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays: 8:30 am St. Thomas, 10:30 am St. Leo's

2nd & 4th Sundays: 8:30 am St. Leo's, 10:30 am St. Thomas

Every Saturday: 5:00 pm at St. Leo's

Sunday and Daily Masses can be viewed on the Fargo Diocese website.

Go to: www.fargodiocese.org

on the home page you can either click right on the video

or

under the heading **'Watch the Daily Mass from St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo'**

click on the blue highlighted words **Diocese of Fargo YouTube** page and you can watch the Sunday Mass or the Daily Mass (all videos are dated).

Parish Staff:

Pastor: Fr. James Ermer

E-mail: james.ermer@fargodiocese.org

Secretary: Delores Grommesh

Phone: 701-347-4609

E-mail: stleo@casselton.net

Liturgy/RE: Sue Knoll

Phone: 701-347-4609

Cell: 701-261-2047

E-mail: dre@stleosnd.org

Website: www.stleosnd.org

Prayer Chain:

Bea Bachmeier: 347-5555

Kelsey Lako: 793-7088

Maintenance: Paul & Sherry Radermacher

Phone: 701-793-7740; 701-793-7798

St. Leo's Directors: Mark Rehovsky & Mark Wieland

St. Thomas Directors: Larry Zaun & Gary Milbrandt

Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. Leo's

4:00 - 4:45 pm Saturday

at St. Thomas

8:00 - 8:15 am

before all 8:30 am Masses

~ Anytime by appointment
~ Communal Services during
Advent and Lent

New Members: If you are new to the area, we would love to have you as a registered member. To register as a new member of the parish, please visit with Fr. Ermer after Mass.

~~~~~  
Please join in praying the Rosary  
25 minutes before the Saturday evening  
and Sunday morning Mass times.

PARISH EVENTS/MEETINGS

Mon., Mar 30 - 7:00 pm - Eucharist Parent Meeting in lower level of Church  
Mon., Mar 30 - 7:00 pm - KC Rosary at St. Leo's  
Tues., Mar 31 - 7:00 pm - KC Rosary at St. Leo's  
Wed., Apr. 1 - 3:46 pm - RE classes at St. Thomas  
Wed., Apr. 1 - 6:30 pm - RE classes at St. Leo's  
6:15 pm - Junior Choir Practice  
**Fri., Apr 3 - 7:00 pm - St. Leo's** **Confirmation Service**


CANCELLED

When we return to regular events you will be notified by email.

Additional Individual Reconciliation times for the week of Mar. 29:

Mon., Mar. 30 - starting at 6:30– 7:00 pm - St. Leo's  
Tues., Mar. 31 - starting at 6:30– 7:00 pm - St. Leo's  
Wed., April 1 - starting at 6:30– 7:00 pm - St. Leo's  
**Thurs., April 2 - starting at 6:30– 7:00 pm - St. Thomas**  
Fri., April 3 - starting at 6:30– 7:00 pm - St. Leo's  
Sat., April 4 - starting at 4:00– 5:00 pm - St. Leo's

You can also call Fr. Ermer to schedule a time for Reconciliation as well. 347-5609

|                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                            |                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Saturday Apr 4</b><br><b>5:00 pm</b><br><b>St. Leo's</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Sunday Apr 5</b><br><b>8:30 am</b><br><b>St. Thomas</b> | <b>Sunday Apr 5</b><br><b>10:30 am</b><br><b>St. Leo's</b> |
| <b>Lector</b>                                                                      | Tricia Geggelman<br>Lois Titus                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Keith Biggers<br>Gary Milbrandt                            | Anna Garman<br>Gavin Oberlander                            |
| <b>Eucharistic Ministers</b>                                                       | Due to concerns regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), the Eucharistic Ministers at St. Thomas will temporarily suspend the distribution of the Eucharist. This change will mean that only one EMHC will be needed for the Sunday morning Mass at St. Leo's. If you are new to the ministry, please check in before Mass to see that it is all right for you. <b>TENTATIVE Ministry Schedule</b> |                                                            |                                                            |
| <b>Altar Servers</b>                                                               | Jonika Hoff<br>Ethan Rich                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Anna Vavra<br>Hallie Besette                               | Jacob Dutchuk<br>Isabelle Dutchuk<br>Eva or Olivia Garman  |
| <b>Offertory Collectors</b>                                                        | Volunteer needed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Joe & Lora Killoran                                        | Volunteer needed                                           |
| <b>Gift Bearers</b>                                                                | Volunteer needed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Robert & Mary Lynne Snyder                                 | Volunteer needed                                           |

NEWS AND NOTES

**Sunday Offertory:** Since all parish households have Sunday offertory envelopes, your Sunday offertory envelope can be either be mailed to the parish office or dropped off at the parish office.

If this is a time you would like to join others who are enrolled in the automatic cash withdrawal for your Sunday offertory collection, please call Delores (347-4609) for details.

**Lenten Canisters** – One recipient of our Lenten canisters is **Catholic Relief Services**. For 76 years Catholic Relief Services has provided services to the poor in developing countries. Services include sanitation, running water, education, food, medical care to those impacted by war and natural disasters in countries like Sudan, Haiti, India, Central America, Indonesia and the Middle East. Please be generous in supporting our Lenten charities.

**All KC events at St. Leo's are pending and put on hold until further notice.**

**Help needed!** Bishop Folda received a call from Pastor Sue Koesterman, Executive Director of Churches United for the Homeless. **She is experiencing a shortage of food and volunteers.** If anyone would be interested in helping provide some bag lunches or large pans of food, please call Pastor Sue at (218)236-0372 ext. 238 for guidance as to what would be most helpful.

**Keeping the Seasons:** If you have had the chance to visit St. Leo's or St. Thomas this week you will notice that we are still decorated for the Lenten season. Palm Sunday (April 5<sup>th</sup>), the Triduum- Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday (April 9-11<sup>th</sup>) and Easter (April 12<sup>th</sup>) are fast approaching. We will most likely be celebrating these great days very differently than we ever have before but we do plan to decorate the environment in the churches in keeping with these days. Next Sunday we will have blest palms for you to pick up and take home with you. They will be in the church entry at St. Leo's and in the St. Thomas Social Hall. (They do tend to dry out in the open air so we will have them in plastic.) Also, we will be getting Easter flowers so if you would like to make a donation, you can use the form here- or make your own- and drop it off at St. Leo's parish office.

**We are again offering the opportunity to make a donation toward Easter flowers and environment in honor or memory of a loved one. Slips and donations may be dropped off at the parish office.**

**Person(s) to be honored** \_\_\_\_\_ **Living** \_\_\_\_\_ **Deceased** \_\_\_\_\_

**Donor's name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount of donation** \_\_\_\_\_

**This week's Stewardship moment:**

*"Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God'" - John 11:40*

Many of us say the we believe in God. We go to church on Sunday. We volunteer for events at our parish. But when life gets hard, the pressure is on, when thing aren't going our way, do we really believe, do we really put our trust in the Lord? When we live a life of gratitude, being thankful for the gifts we have been given, we really do see that God is providing all that we need. It opens our hearts to see God's active presence in our daily lives.