



Press Release

March 21, 2020

St. John Paul II Catholic Parish

Idaho Falls, Idaho:

As directed by the Catholic Bishop of Boise, the Most Reverend Peter F. Christensen, St. John Paul II Catholic parish in Idaho Falls has suspended all public Masses, celebrations and meetings until at least after April 5, 2020. St. John Paul II parish is comprised of Holy Rosary Church, Christ the King Church and Holy Rosary Catholic School. Holy Rosary Catholic School has suspended classes until April 13, 2020, but continues to do distance learning with the children.

Fr. Ronald Wekerle, pastor of St. John Paul II Catholic parish said that video Masses are being uploaded everyday onto the parish's Facebook page, "Saint John Paul II Parish – Parroquia San Juan Pablo II" or parish website, ifcatholics.net. Also, Catholic Bishop Peter Christensen invites Catholics to view the Mass on line by going to: [http:// www.CatholicTV.org/masses/catholicTV-mass](http://www.CatholicTV.org/masses/catholicTV-mass).

Fr. Wekerle said that as a result of the pandemic Catholics are not able to gather for Mass and instead are asked to prepare a place in their home where they can read from the bible and practice traditional Catholic devotions, such as the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet and the Stations of the Cross. In place of sharing communion, Catholics are asked to make a "Spiritual Communion" with the Lord. Catholics unable to celebrate reconciliation at this time are asked to follow the directives given in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and confess their sins directly to God, and at the first opportunity, seek out a priest for sacramental confession. Viaticum and anointing of the sick for the dying will be available, as is possible, by calling the parish office at (208) 522-4366 and requesting the services of a priest. The parish office remains open but access to the office building is limited.

On Friday, March 27, 2020, Catholic Bishop Christensen is calling for a Day of Prayer and Fasting. Inviting all people to pray and fast this day as a way of showing our solidarity with God and one another.

Information about these extraordinary measures and how St. John Paul II Catholic parish is responding to this new reality is available on the parish website, ifcatholics.net or by calling the parish office, (208) 522-4366.

What are we doing at St. John Paul II parish and how we are responding:

- Developed a comprehensive communication strategy to stay connected with our parishioners comprised of letters, email, website and Facebook.
- Formed a Parish Life and Wellness Committee to assist the pastor in making important decisions and give feedback.
- Practicing social distancing.
- Inviting people to create family or personal prayer spaces in their homes, that may include a bible, statues of Jesus, Mary and the saints and lighting a candle.
- Encouraging traditional Catholic devotions, such as the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet and Stations of the Cross.
- Video streaming weekend and daily Mass in both English and Spanish.
- On Thursday, video streaming Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the Rosary, and on Fridays, video streaming Stations of the Cross, traditional Catholic devotions.
- Encouraging people wherever they live, to practice appropriate social distancing and personal hygiene, especially hand washing.
- Being a Helpful Neighbor; helping vulnerable populations by offering to assist them with meal assistance, grocery shopping, prescription pick-up or another need.
- To our youth, we've asked them to show care for community and help protect the elderly and vulnerable populations by avoiding gathering and being with friends.
- At our great school, teachers have developed comprehensive curriculums and are doing distance learning with their students.
- Disinfected all church pews and public areas and are looking into state of the art cleaning procedures.
- And finally, we are asking our people to PRAY to God. We ask people to ask the Lord to provide the knowledge and resources necessary to erradic this terrible disease. And we pray for the sick and those who have died.