

ST. AGATHA CATHOLIC CHURCH
1430 SE NEHALEM STREET
PORTLAND, OR 97202

March 24, 2020

My Dearest Parishioners,

With sadness beyond words, I am writing you on this Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent - the first day of the new regime established by the governor's latest executive order. Although all public Masses are currently cancelled until after Easter Sunday (or beyond maybe), Holy Mass is being celebrated daily at our parish church to offer worship to Almighty God and to pray for the welfare of our people – your families. It is truly heartbreaking for me, a parish priest, to see for the first time how his beloved parish church is now silent with empty rows upon empty rows. But the Holy Mass and the Sacraments are for the people, and, although you are not present, I am celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in communion with all of you and for you, even as I am in communion with the saints and the Angels! The strength of our bonds is not merely emotional or even moral, but based on the reality of our sharing in the Communion of Saints and our common membership in the Body of Christ! And so, out of sight, out of mind? CERTAINLY NOT! You are in my thoughts and my prayers – daily!

Now, having said all of the above, I would like to invite you to stop by the church and make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. You could also make the Way of the Cross, or pray the Rosary, or recite the Divine Mercy Chaplet, while you tarry in the presence of our Blessed Lord in the Tabernacle. The church will stay open basically between 10am– 3pm daily. Please observe the six-foot rule inside the church. More than ever before, now is the time for us to be especially close to our Blessed Lord and be rooted in Him! Whatever the government might deem essential, for Christians, the essentials must include, first and foremost, a deep and abiding relationship with God – a relationship that generates life. But that relationship must be nurtured and guarded by prayers and the Sacraments. In the absence of Sunday Mass in the life of a Catholic, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is the most profound way to stay connected to the Sacrifice of the Mass. At the same time, prayers and devotions keep alive that hunger for the Eucharist.

And now, the hard part: I humbly request that, to the extent possible, you continue to support your parish church so that we could keep the church “operational” throughout this open-ended ordeal. Please visit our website www.stagathaportland.com for online donations and for updates. You could certainly mail us your contributions or drop them off at the office (or through the mail slot). As Mother Angelica used to say, “*Please remember us between the electric and the water bills!*” Yes, please remember St. Agatha's! As you know, the parish relies solely on Sunday collections for its operations. With the latest executive order now in place, we are facing a future fraught with severe financial hardships. And yet, with complete trust in God and with confidence in your selfless generosity, I have very hopeful that this critical moment will bring us closer together with a deeper trust in God's goodness and greater affections for each other!

Ultimately, we live from the generosity of our Good God and, therefore, in these extraordinary times, we commend our survival to His Providence.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Father Luan Tran
Pastor

PS ~ I'm in
the office!
Kauw