

Church of the Holy Spirit  
153 S Main Street  
Gloversville, New York 12078

Holy Trinity Church  
205 Glebe Street  
Johnstown, New York 12095

April 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

This Lent certainly took some twists and turns that we were not expecting. Under normal circumstances, we look forward to gathering together each spring in our parish churches to commemorate when our Lord Jesus made his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, celebrated the last supper with his disciples, suffered his passion and death, and rose again on Easter Sunday. During this time of the year, we are accustomed to gathering frequently for penance services, Daily Mass, youth and adult faith formation programs, and much more. Therefore, it has been admittedly odd to have to stay at home and pray from afar due to the effects that COVID-19 has had on our world.

During this time of frustration, sadness, loneliness, and anger, we have been searching for ways to try and make sense of this. People have raised a number of opinions in local newspapers, on social media, and on television. Thankfully, they include a profound sense of gratitude for the medical community and other essential workers who are putting their safety on the line to provide life-saving care for their neighbor. They deserve our admiration.

Some voices have a difficult time reconciling the church's response to the epidemic, feeling as if the church has abandoned them due to the absence of public Masses, confessions, and other sacramental opportunities. As a priest, it is sorrowful to not be able to carry out my duties as I normally would want to. In wrestling with those emotions, I have to believe that Jesus, who spent much of his time ministering to the sick, the outcasts, and the marginalized, would want us to do our part in not taking chances in spreading disease, particularly to the most vulnerable members of our society. Uniting ourselves at home in prayer and safeguarding those at risk for a life-threatening illness is a tangible way of being Christ to one another. It is not easy to accept this temporary "new normal", but it is our reality for the time being.

While we are sequestered in our own "upper rooms", so to speak, I encourage you to nourish your faith life through the various outlets that our diocese and our parishes offer. The Evangelist (in print form and online form) is an excellent resource. Likewise, I invite you to follow Church of the Holy Spirit and Holy Trinity Church on facebook for updates. They include timely messages from the diocese, parish staff, volunteers, and me. They also include recorded liturgies so you can remain connected to the parishes while in the safety of your home. For those without facebook accounts, you can also view recorded liturgies on my YouTube Channel (search for Fr. Matt Wetsel in the YouTube search bar).

On a related note, I am very grateful to the parishioners who are faithfully mailing in their envelopes to the offices as well as those who are taking advantage of Holy Spirit's e-giving program. Your support helps us to be able to maintain our financial obligations. If you have not been able to give recently, our respective office addresses are as follows:

Holy Trinity Church Office  
207 Glebe Street  
Johnstown, New York 12095

Church of the Holy Spirit Office  
153 S Main Street  
Gloversville, New York 12078

In closing, I thank you for your prayers and your witness to the faith during this unprecedented time in our nation's history. Please know that I am thinking about you and praying for you when I celebrate Mass privately and when I retreat to my rectory chapel to pray the liturgy of the hours. Please do not be afraid to call me if you wish to speak with me (518 762 2011, extension 2) or email me at [Matthew.Wetsel@rcda.org](mailto:Matthew.Wetsel@rcda.org)

Let us remember the gentle, soothing words that the Lord spoke to Moses in addressing His people: “The LORD said to Moses: Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them: This is how you shall bless the Israelites. Say to them: The LORD bless you and keep you! The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!” (Numbers 6:22-25).

God Bless You,

Fr. Matt Wetsel