



Sacred Heart Parish

Coronavirus Crisis

14 March 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Some years ago, when I was based in Anchorage, I wandered into the parking lot to ask some young people if they'd mind not using the space as a racing arena for their go-carts. They apologized very politely and said that since it wasn't Sunday, they didn't think there would be a problem.

For Catholics, our church is so much more than a weekly prayer hall. We, who believe that Christ is truly present there, have a sense of the sacred even as we come into view of the building. It is shocking to most of us that we would ever consider closing the doors on what is our place of prayer for 365 days of the year (or 366 days in this leap year!).

If someone had done this against us, we would protest with all our strength. However, the banishment we suffer is at our own hands – we take this action for the good of the whole community, for the benefit of all the people of our wonderful state of Alaska.

None of us could be at peace knowing someone died unnecessarily because of our insistence in gathering. At times like these, special care of the vulnerable is our responsibility. Let us bring this sacrifice we make to the foot of the cross and offer that sacrifice to Christ's for the salvation of the world, knowing -- as he did -- that God is always with us.

Let us pray for each other and for the world as we endure the trials of the time. I encourage you to spend time in prayer with your loved ones especially on Sunday – and if you can, pray together at what would be your regular Mass time.

Although there will be no public liturgies for now, Father Armand and I will continue to offer Mass in private for the parishioners of Sacred Heart, Our Lady of the Lake, St Christopher, St Bernard and St Philip as well as the staff and children of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, we place our trust in you.

Pax,

Fr Joseph Mc Gilloway Pastor