



March 17, 2020  
**Feast of Saint Patrick**

Dear Parishioner of Blessed Trinity and Spirit of Christ:

The prayer of Saint Patrick echoes through our heart, soul and mind these days:

**Christ with me, Christ before me,  
Christ behind me, Christ in me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me...**

The "Corona Virus pandemic" grips our attention, and fills us with concern and worry, as the very center and focus of our faith and worship begins to be a cause of concern, separating us from one another, even as we attempt through our caring actions to protect one another with whom we gather and those who live around us. These days we all feel unsettled as this virus continues to spread disrupting our lives, relationships and day to day activities. In all of this we still "keep faith," trust in God's abiding presence and value even more the community of faith of which we are an integral part.

Our shared concern these days, our primary priority, is the safety, care and continued health of our fellow parishioners. We also support the directives and services of our local, state and federal government. At the same time the pastoral care of those who are most susceptible to this virus and those already sick, must remain a priority.

**That necessary priority has led Bishop Austin Vetter to SUSPEND ALL PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS OF MASS THROUGHOUT THE DIOCESE OF HELENA UNTIL AT LEAST MONDAY MARCH 30, 2020 (this means that there will be no Mass on the weekends of March 21/22 and 28/29 (the fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent) and no daily Mass. This also includes the cancellation of the March 30 Penance Service and all other parish gatherings, meetings, prayer groups, scripture study, youth gatherings, choir, adult faith formation, etc. Our parish offices will be closed beginning Thursday, March 19. The Funeral liturgy can be celebrated *but only with immediate family participating*. Bishop Vetter indicates that the Diocese will continue to monitor the situation and issue updates as necessary. Bishop's letter is available on the parish website. *(These same suspensions are also occurring in the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.)***

**Pastoral visits of Ministers of Holy Communion to our various care centers must, unfortunately, be curtailed immediately. Each of those residences have already been closed to visitors. Holy Communion to the homebound must also be curtailed at this time. The Pastoral Care of the Sick, however, will remain a priority. IN CASE OF ANY NEED OR CONCERN PLEASE CALL ME DIRECTLY (406-721-1675), PARTICULARLY IF THERE IS NEED FOR THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK OR PRAYER FOR THE DYING. The same is true for any need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession). Simply call me.**

This, of course, is a momentous and sad moment in both our local and worldwide Church. To suspend the Sunday celebration of Eucharist, while necessary, during these days, for public "safety," is a separation from the very core of who we are as Catholics. There can be no substitute for the gathering of God's holy people, around the Lord's Table, for a "full, conscious, and active participation" in the Lord's Supper at which we all both eat and drink of the body and blood of the risen Christ. Perhaps, however, these days of a "fast" from the Holy Eucharist, will lead us to a deeper appreciation for both Sunday as the "day of the Lord;" the deep need we each have to be at Christ's altar of sacrifice and praise, and the profound gift we offer to the whole Church by our regular presence and persistent participation.

This "suspension" of Sunday Mass, however, does not mean that we cease to pray, belong or participate. More than ever, we need to "Lift up our hearts to the Lord" and offer thanks and praise. We need to remember one another, attend to the needs and gifts of friends, family and neighbors; pray together as a household, especially

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on Sunday, remembering that God gives life to all things, makes them holy and never ceases to gather a people so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a sacrifice may be offered. To assist and support your personal, family or household prayer during these days helpful resources are available on your parish website:

[blessedtrinitymissoula.org](http://blessedtrinitymissoula.org).

- ❖ **Give Us This Day**, a resource prayer book from Liturgical Press is available for prayer each day based on the Liturgy of Hours (Morning, Evening and Night Prayer); The Order of Mass for each day of the week, including Sunday (Prayers, scripture, reflection, etc.) as well as other insights and reflections. We are grateful to Liturgical Press for providing this resource free of charge.
- ❖ In addition, **"The Lent 2020 Page"** on the parish website provides many other resources for prayer at home.
- ❖ Also the **My Parish App**, which many have on their smart phone, will contain other resources. If you wish assistance in placing this "App" on your phone, email Judy Cooney, ([judyc@blessedtrinitymissoula.org](mailto:judyc@blessedtrinitymissoula.org)) and she will respond to assist you.
- ❖ Each household and each person prays in particular and regular ways. Continue that prayer with even deeper conviction and persistence.

Finally, during these "crisis" days your parish weekly or monthly stewardship continues to be of importance. Staff salaries will continue to be paid, regular bills, like your own, come due. So please maintain your regular offering by mailing it to the parish. Thank you.

**HONORING THE PAST, SERVING THE PRESENT, AND PROVIDING FOR THE FUTURE** Capital Campaign continues. If you have not yet responded, please do so soon via the mail. As of March 16 we have reached \$231,133 of our \$500,000 goal! Thank you to all who have responded thus far.

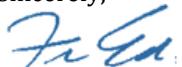
As we move through this national crisis we celebrate the truth that the gifts and needs of our faith community continue and we firmly believe that the spirit and resilience of our parish will be sustained and increased.

The prayer of Saint Patrick is ours:

**I arise today  
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,  
Through belief in the Threeness,  
Through confession of the Oneness  
of the Creator of creation.**

May the Lord be with you to protect you, guide you and give you strength, watch over you, and bless you with peace.

Sincerely,



Fr. Ed Hislop, Pastor

406-721-1675

Email: [edjh1455@gmail.com](mailto:edjh1455@gmail.com)

Please Note: Updates, Information, etc., will be made available on the parish website: [blessedtrinitymissoula.org](http://blessedtrinitymissoula.org) and on the **Parish App** (available for your smart phone) and on the parish regular phone system (**406-721-2405**).

The Blessed Trinity + Spirit of Christ Parish **BULLETIN** will continue to be published and placed on the parish website and the smartphone app.

**1475 Eaton Street ~ Missoula, MT 59801**

**406-721-2405 Email: [Office@blessedtrinitymissoula.org](mailto:Office@blessedtrinitymissoula.org) Web Site: [blessedtrinitymissoula.org](http://blessedtrinitymissoula.org)**