

Dear Parish Family,

May God abundantly bless you! I, Fr. Chris, and all the staff at St. Joseph's miss each and every one of you. It is certainly very strange to not come together for Mass; for, from the very beginning, even the secular writers recognized this as the distinctive feature of the Christian religion. We know that the Mass is a sacred meal and a sacrifice; that it is a sharing in the New Covenant of Christ's Blood; that this New Covenant is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant. Just as the Jews celebrated and remembered diligently and with so much dignity their deliverance from physical bondage in Egypt, how much more should we celebrate, give thanks for, remember, and actually participate in with grave dignity and vibrant joy our deliverance from bondage to sin by the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ!

Furthermore, we are social creatures; it is in our very nature to come together for friendship, feasting, and worshipping. That the foundation of society is the family has always been a tenant of western culture. Families come together to form communities, and the most important community is the Parish Family, families coming together in shared beliefs and values, usually because of geographical closeness, to support each other and build a community of faith where their families can thrive, where their children can learn the faith and build a foundation solid as a rock before they embark on the journey of life.

However, with no Masses in person, and with the availability to stream Mass from anywhere in the world, what need have we for the local parish? Is it obsolete? This is a question I have been asking myself. The answer is, of course, no. This will end. We will return to Church, and we must return as a parish united in faith, united in mission, united in love, and united in community. I encourage you to stay connected to your parish family through this time by keeping in contact with each other, and utilizing the online resources from your parish, which I will provide below.

We must see this time as an opportunity: an opportunity to grow in our faith; an opportunity to live our faith more deeply in our homes as families; an opportunity to really, truly cultivate a deep love for Jesus, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament; an opportunity to grow in fraternal charity as we face hardships with those we are spending more time with; an opportunity to grow in Christian charity as we help those affected by the virus; an opportunity to grow in humility as we limit our movements and actions which could expose others; and finally, during Holy Week, an opportunity to live these mysteries deeply with our families, entering into the story of our faith, celebrating the mysteries of our faith with great devotion with our families. And so, I would like to present to you some resources for celebrating Holy Week at home, and would like to deeply thank Jen Munoz and Margaret Cabaniss for helping to put together "Holy Week at Home resources." You are all in my prayers. I hope to see you all soon!

I think we are going to be very happy to be back together again. It will be cause for celebration, and I am working on planning a big one. Stay tuned!

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, or anyone at the parish if you need help with anything. You can even email, text or call me on Sunday morning (or other days for Triduum liturgies) if you need help accessing the livestream, or finding a worship aid, or anything.

Email: jcole@stjoemish.com

Cell: (812) 508-0427

****NOTE: Facebook livestreams can be accessed without a facebook account****

****NOTE: Livestreams stay accessible on page even after event is done, so you need not be up at 6am for live Mass. You can always access and watch it later.****

Current situation (April 7th, 2020):

1. All public events at the church are canceled until further notice.
2. The church remains open for private prayer, officially 6am to 7pm every day, though usually Fr. Chris keeps the church open until close to 10pm.
3. The church must be locked when liturgies are ongoing.
4. For Confession, simply call or email the office to make a request, and we will inform you when to come to church for Confession, which will be done in the sacristy with the proper physical distance and privacy.
5. Please sign up for online giving if you have not already done so. It is simple and easy. www.osvonlinegiving.com/1253
6. For Sick calls, Last Rites, Baptisms, Marriage Prep, or any other information, you can call the office just as normal: 574.255.6134
7. **Please see pastoral letter from Fr. Christopher Lapp, linked below.**

Parish facebook page for accessing livestreams: facebook.com/saintjoemish

Parish website: stjoemish.com

Parish website covid-19 page: stjoemish.com/covid-19

Worship aids for Masses and other livestreamed events: stjoemish.com/covid-19/livestream

Times for Live-streamed Masses (You can always access these videos even *after* the livestream)

April 9th: Holy Thursday – 5:00 pm

April 10th: Good Friday – 1:00 pm

April 10th: Tenebrae – 9:00 pm on Good Friday

April 11th: Easter Vigil – 9pm

April 12th: Easter Sunday – 6am

Stay in touch by reading the bulletin online, and download the parish app!

https://discovermass.com/church/saint-joseph-mishawaka-in/#_bulletins

Pastoral letter from Fr. Chris: stjoemish.com/covid-19/church-directives

Holy Week at Home resources: stjoemish.com/covid-19

Helpful hints:

1. Perhaps create an altar area with candles around your big screen television, and use that to live-stream Mass.
2. Each family member could use their phone to access the worship aid to be able to participate in Mass with all the responses, readings, and hymns.
3. I know the sound has not been perfect – sorry! If you are worried about sound, you can always plug external, powered speakers into your device, and I will do what I can to continue to improve it.