

## *Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord + April 5, 2020*

*Readings: Procession with the Palms: Matthew 21:1-11*

*Mass Readings: +Isaiah 50:4-7 +Philippians 2:6-11 +Matthew 26:14-27:66*

### *Dear Parishioner...Around & About Ste. Rose,*

#### **A Brief Up-Date: No Palm Branch Distribution**

Due to the “spike” that is expected with viral infections as a result of COVID 19 in the next two weeks, The Diocese of Springfield has urged all parishes **to not** distribute palm branches in any manner whatsoever. **There is no way to assure safe palm distribution.** As the “spike” in COVID 19 cases is expected within the next two weeks, the urgent request from the CDC, State, and Federal government is **stay home** except for essential services. We are performing our Christian duty by following these guidelines when, caring for our neighbor, each of us stays home and be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. All medical personnel in Emergency Rooms throughout the USA are pleading with each of us to help them respond to new and existing patients by staying home and employing social distancing. If each of us stays home, we assist all first responders and medical personnel. So, let’s all do our part in the battle against COVID 19. Keep all first responders and medical personnel in our thoughts and prayers as they courageously battle COVID 19 – they are the “front line” in this battle of saving human lives.

#### **Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday 2020**

For Christians around the globe, Palm Sunday 2020 is an extremely unique experience -no procession with palm as the Church customarily re-enacts Jesus’ triumphant entry into the City of Jerusalem. From the triumphant entry into Jerusalem to the agony of Jesus’ betrayal and passion, the culmination of his ministry is nearly approaching – The Resurrection! Though we are unable to celebrate the Holy Week services each of us can view these Holy Week services through television. Easter Sunday 2020 will be unique as well – no Easter Sunday Masses as well as smaller (if any) family gatherings will be able to be celebrated. It does not mean; however, that there is no Easter! Easter Sunday is still being celebrated! The Easter season will still be celebrated! Hopefully, as we move toward Pentecost Sunday the COVID 19 virus pandemic will be over and celebrate the reception of the Holy Spirit. The Lenten season, as unique as it continues to be, can assist us in re-examining the ministry of the Church and of its significance in each of our lives. What all people of faith have taken for granted as Sunday Mass/worship services “always being there” becomes food for thought! Perhaps questions we could ponder: Has Mass-less Sundays affected my life? If so, how? Has isolation at home had an affect in my life? If so, how? Will I/we have greater compassion for those members of our communities who are isolated day in and day out? Remember, ‘Lenten’ is a Latin word meaning springtime or growth. Will this Lenten season, a time of real deprivation and fear, possibly be a springboard to embracing a more spiritual way of life while recognizing how fragile human life truly is? Have I/we experienced a

sense of vulnerability? Have I/we even questioned the meaning and purpose of life? These are but a few questions we may ponder during this pandemic.

### **What will our parishes look like post COVID 19**

I see two scenarios as possibilities:

1. A resurgence of faith as was experienced post 9/11
2. A complete collapse of the Church as we know it today.

### **This & That**

Everyday life has been altered in ways that we could not have imagined. In my life, I have had to perform ordinary everyday issues: cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, and straightening dresser drawers and closets. I must admit I don't mind it at all! But it reminded me of what all of you do every day. Then add in your parental responsibilities, I became overwhelmed by what you do! Now that the children are out of school until at least May, I can only imagine the added stress of assisting your children with pursuing their education. Having your children home 24/7 must be challenging at best. Then there are the evenings! With no parish meetings, I've maintained my exercise routines and have watched more series, movies, and television than normal. Made more popcorn than is usual to go along with the movies, etc. I am sure it must be the same with you. A little more time "on-line" is part of the day as well. I have kept up with many emails sent by so many of you who are reaching out to me making sure that I am safe and well – I assure you, I am very well! It's a wonder that the internet doesn't crash with all the extra demand! I am also grateful to so many of you who have either dropped off your "sacrificial offerings" or sent them in through the USPS – thank you so much. Last week we deposited \$4,995.00. And of course, keeping up with my Mother every day by telephone and shopping for her essential needs and delivering them to her as they arise.

I have a longing to return to life as we knew it; however, I believe we will experience a "new normal." I have no idea what it will be but, together we will continue to walk with each other in this great adventure of life and faith. May God bless you and your families during these difficult times. I pray we stay united in prayer during this upcoming Holy Week and Easter season.

With peace and love,

***Fr Bill***