

March 17, 2020
J.M.J.

Dear Parishioners,

This is my latest letter concerning COVID-19, commonly known as the Coronavirus. In my over 37-years as a priest, this is the saddest letter I have ever written. Tears stream down my face as I compose it. I hope they do not short-out my keyboard!

Venerable Carlo Acutis, pray for us! Who is that? Read the last part of this letter.

Our local government leaders and Church leaders continue to give us concrete direction. Pray for all our leaders; they have the tremendous burden of leadership on their shoulders. They don't like any of this any more than we do.

We are making adjustments to parish life out of an abundance of caution. At this writing, I know of no serious threats because someone here has been exposed to the Coronavirus. Yet we are being overly cautious rather than erring on the other side. There will be some disruption and inconvenience.

At the direction of the Archbishop of Indianapolis, along with consulting our own parish staff and leaders, including the administration of Saint Luke Catholic Preschool and School—I announce (or repeat) the following:

Sacramental Life:

Our Indiana Bishops have suspended the public celebration of Mass and all Liturgical Services until further notice. We priests will celebrate “private Masses” (Mass without a congregation) for the intentions listed in the bulletin.

Perpetual Adoration Chapels are closed until further notice.

Liturgical Celebrations such as Baptisms, Funerals, Weddings, Confirmations, and so forth will come under some special circumstances. If and when you are involved in one of these we will consult about what options are available.

Directives about Holy Week—the week of April 5—will be forthcoming.

Of course, Anointing of the Sick and/or the Last Rites can be administered to those in danger of death.

Regular visits to the homebound by the clergy or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are suspended until further notice.

Elsewhere in the bulletin various options to watch or hear Mass on radio, television, or online are listed. Catholic Radio Indianapolis broadcasts Mass everyday at 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Consult our Web Page (www.stluke.org) or the Archdiocesan Web Page (www.archindy.org) for additional opportunities.

The Church has always made use of what we call a “Spiritual Communion.” This is uniting ourselves to Christ’s Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament when for some reason we cannot receive Holy Communion. Here is an example. You can *Google* for other versions online.

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Saint Luke Catholic School and Preschool, SMRE (Sunday Morning Religious Education), and Youth Ministry:

Our educational administrators have been in frequent contact with families through the usual channels. Our school and preschool are closed until at least Monday, April 6, the conclusion of Spring Break.

Our school staff is doing a marvelous job—not only with the E-Learning—but with daily announcement videos for students and frequent updates for parents.

Since schools are closed it only follows that all extracurricular school activities are cancelled during this time period. This would include all sports, sport practices,

scout meetings, the school musical, even the Passion Play and so forth. We will reschedule what we can if the opportunity presents itself.

All the schools Saint Luke children attend are closed until at least April 6; it only makes sense to suspend SMRE Classes and Youth Ministry activities until then.

It seems to me that to make this effective all parents and families will need to sort of “self-quarantine.” If students are not in school but are spending time together at the mall, the movie theater, or some sports facility—this will be counterproductive.

Parish Life:

The Parish Office is officially closed until further notice. Our staff will work from home. In the meantime, we are “open for business” that can be conducted via email or phone. Our staff will be able to check voice mail and email from home. Our maintenance staff will be deep cleaning all of the areas of our facility.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has mandated that **all meetings** be cancelled. I’m sorry, but this “no meetings” restriction is the only slightly bright spot in this whole dark cloud!

We plan to continue to publish the *Sunday Steward*, our parish bulletin. Even though Masses are suspended, you can read it online. Go to our parish Web Site: www.stluke.org. Click on “Bulletins” to find it. I’ll try to keep you posted on things through my weekly letter.

Generally Speaking:

These actions will cause hardship. But again we would rather be criticized for an abundance of caution as opposed to taking things lightly. **Lent is a time for penance and fasting. Think of all these good things—of which we will be deprived—as a form of fasting for Lent 2020.** When we get back to normal we should have a better appreciation of these things we have taken for granted.

I love Saint Luke Parish. I am especially mindful of families who have challenges with child care or lost income during this time period. Yet I have no doubt that we

will come through this global pandemic by looking out for and taking care of one another. We always have.

If you need anything, do not hesitate to contact your priests at Saint Luke. Don't worry; we won't tell you we are only working from home!

At the beginning of this letter I invoked the intercession of **Venerable Carlo Acutis**. Carlo is an Italian teenager who is on his way to sainthood. I first encountered his story when I visited his tomb at the Church of Saint Mary Major in Assisi, Italy, last October.

Carlo died at the age of 15 from leukemia on October 12, 2006. (October 12 was also my dad's birthday.) Carlo Acutis was a normal teenager—whatever that is. One clue to being “normal” was that in addition to loving sports he was a computer and tech “whiz.”

The extraordinary thing about Carlo Acutis is that he was devoted to the Holy Eucharist. He went to daily Mass; he loved Eucharistic Adoration. While at the same time his own family was much like many families today—not real regular or good at getting the family to Sunday Mass.

In fact, Carlo designed an online database about Eucharistic Miracles throughout the world. He designed a traveling exhibition on the same subject. A recent miraculous healing of child in Brazil has been attributed to Carlo's intercession. He will soon be beatified.” Sainthood is the next step.

Carlo Acutis wanted everyone to love the Holy Eucharist and place it first in their lives. I am entrusting our deprivation of the Holy Eucharist, our suffering, and our painful response to the Coronavirus Pandemic to Venerable Carlo Acutis. Ask this young man to pray with us and for us. Ask him to provoke another miracle! Just *Google* his name or go to <https://www.carolacutis.com> to find out more.

Of one thing I am convinced; of one thing I am certain: Providence never fails!

Faithfully yours in the Providence that so far had never failed us,

Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel