



NEWS FROM FR. STAN

WHAT TO DO AT A VIRTUAL MASS | MARCH 26, 2020

Instructional letter from Fr. Stan

Thank you to the hundreds who are watching the Mass being streamed live at 8:30 am seven days a week on the St. Joseph Catholic Community Facebook page. It is also available for viewing by 10:00 am every day on our regular website, www.stjosephwaconia.org. Last Sunday's Mass was got nearly 1,700 views.

Some people have been asking how we actually participate in Mass when watching it on TV or online. First of all, I'm glad we have this technology now. It still helps people gather together (many send messages of greeting to the others, and many submit intercessions which we read during the prayer of the faithful.) But when all this is over, it will be time to return to celebrate in person. We are human beings, and we gather and reach out as human beings, not simply virtually. Having done only one Mass without a congregation before March 19, I will tell you it is strange not having people before me, and I hope you also hunger for the other members of the Body of Christ. When we can gather again, we are to gather as physical beings. Watching Mass on TV or Facebook is not a substitute for attending live; it will not fulfill your Sunday obligation. It is something that is helpful for people in nursing homes or otherwise unable to attend Mass, but we can't just say we will catch Mass later on TV after our other activities have been pursued.

So how do you watch or engage in Mass in the meantime? I would ask you to prepare (I would say this in any circumstance) by familiarizing yourself with the readings. They can be found in any number of ways, including our parish app (text APP to 88202 to download), uscgb.org, in printed materials such as Magnificat or Give Us This Day. The latter two are making all their online materials available free during this crisis.

While the Mass is on, focus on it. Do not be cooking dinner, having coffee, playing a game with the Mass in the background. Respond as the congregation would at a regular Mass. I'd encourage you to stand at the times you would normally stand - opening, gospel reading, etc. I think kneeling before the TV or computer is not appropriate. I don't know of any consensus about that, but I'd would recommend standing during the Eucharistic prayer rather than kneeling or sitting. Make the sign of the cross on yourself whenever you normally would.

While we are fasting from Communion during this time, in solidarity with one another and with those who can rarely receive communion due to illness, isolation or lack of priests, you can receive *Spiritual Communion*. This is a long-held tradition in the Church, done whenever separated from Holy Communion because of lack of opportunity, grave sin, or inability to swallow. Here is a prayer that is recommended for spiritual communion:

*My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
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.*

I look forward to having Mass with you now and even more so in the future!