Dear Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Family,

Greetings and Peace of the Lord be with you! As we continue our Lenten pilgrimage together and navigate through these unprecedented times of hardship, pain and isolation in our lives; we are yet encouraged to know that our all-loving, all-knowing and all-merciful God is in the eye of the storm. We are a people of faith, hope and charity! In today’s Gospel message we are reminded that we were all born blind and were groping in spiritual darkness. It was on the day of our baptism that we began our spiritual journey of faith in the likeness of Jesus Christ. The new life we receive at baptism gives us the power to bring His love and healing to everything we do and every person we meet. Each of us is meant to be a beacon of light showing others how to live and giving direction to their lives by our good example. The light of Christ is most especially being reflected in and through us today and all the days ahead.

In light of our present situation, I want to ensure you that we are all sharing the disappointment of not being able to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and receive Communion with you during this timeframe, as well as being able to administer the precious Sacraments of God’s grace to you when needed. It is indeed a sacrifice for each one of us. The priests are, however, celebrating private Masses each day at the scheduled times on behalf of the People of God to maintain a spiritual Communion with the entire parish faith community (family). Moreover, the special intention for that particular Mass is being honored and revered during the sacrifice. The priests are praying for your safety, health, and well-being most earnestly during these days, and we thank you for your kind prayers for us as well. Please note the lower Church will remain open each day from 6:00am to 5:00pm for private prayer and devotions. We also ask you to maintain a certain physical distance of at least six feet from one another as per the current protocols. The directives we received from the Diocese of Rockville Centre can be found elsewhere on this website, and will be updated periodically as information becomes available. The Rectory Office will be closed during the unforeseeable future, please call the priest duty phone at (516) 782-1557 for emergencies, or if you have any other deep concerns. We are also looking at other ways and ideas in which we can minister to each other during these most difficult and challenging times.

The Second Vatican Council had this beautiful phrase; our homes are a “Domestic Church.” Perhaps this is a wonderful opportunity to increase family prayer time by watching Holy Mass on the television or praying the Rosary together; prayer at the hinges of each day (morning and evening) and before every meal; or other spiritual ways to keep connected to God and love of neighbor. I am a firm believer that prayer is one of the most powerful things we can do at this moment in time to help us and the world to calm the storm. God will protect us and rid us of this dreadful virus as we return to Him with all our hearts, minds and strength; He will give us peace as we genuinely take care of one another.
I would like to offer an Act of Spiritual Communion Prayer (to be said at Communion time when watching the Mass on TV or on the computer): 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 are already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Lastly, I would like to add some inspiration words from our Auxiliary Bishop, Richard Henning; “This long Lenten Season will be unlike any before in our lives. Right now, thousands of lives depend upon the decisions and actions of each one of us. If we heed the counsel of our medical professionals, they need time to cope with the storm that is breaking upon them – and they need us to help them slow the spread of the virus to buy that precious time. They, and we, need every medical resource for the care of those most vulnerable to this virus. Our isolation, our sacrifice of even that most dear to our hearts, will help make certain that those resources are there for those who need them most.”

“Lent is about prayer, fasting, and almsgiving – know this, this extraordinary moment is an act of charity. We have not closed our Churches in fear; we are embracing a cross for love of our [neighbor]. We will not be able to exercise our ministry in the usual way, but we can exercise ministry nevertheless. Please, help the People of God understand the nature of this moment and the sacrifice that has been asked of us all.”

May our Lord Jesus, the Divine Physician, heal us of every illness and affliction; and in His great mercy forgive us, watch over us, and save us; and may our Blessed Mother Mary, Our Lady of Mercy, keep us always under the mantle of her love, care and protection into eternity.

With my sincere prayers, I remain truly yours in Christ,

Father John McCarthy