

Statement for Website

23 March 2020

First, a few things you should know:

- The St. Vincent DePaul Society of Holy Rosary Parish has issued the following statement:

“Due to the current Covid-19 crisis, while we are committed to our weekly food handouts, we are changing our policy on how that will take place: Going forward and until further notice, we will be implementing a policy whereby clients will enter the exterior main hall doors and be restricted to staying in the vestibule where the interior doors will remain closed. At that point they will state their name to the volunteer that will remain behind the closed interior doors, the volunteer will then place the package on the table that will be provided inside the interior doors and walk away. After the volunteer is cleared of the area the client will then open the interior doors and retrieve their package. Furthermore, sadly at this time we are only able to hand out food packages and not our usual cash vouchers. Once again we are committed to serving our clients at this time when they may need it the most, we must, however, ask that you follow these procedures to the letter in the effort to protect our volunteers and clients.” Note to volunteers: every effort must take place to remain at least two metres from each other and clients. As COVID-19 has been shown to have a long life on surfaces, the serving table must be sprayed and cleaned between clients with a sterilizing solution such as Lysol spray or wipes, or a 10% bleach solution to water in a spray bottle. Door handles should also be sterilized. Frequent hand washing is recommended.

- The Catholic Women’s League of Holy Rosary Parish has decided to cancel its April 14, 2020 monthly meeting. The CWL Diocesan Convention scheduled for May 12-13, 2020 has also been cancelled. There has been no decision yet on whether the Daffodil Tea at Holy Rosary Parish Hall scheduled for April 29, 2020 will be cancelled.

- A number of parents have called me about whether First Communion and Confirmation celebrations scheduled for April 25-26 and May 29, 2020 respectively will be cancelled. At this moment no decision has been made but I strongly suspect they will be cancelled. I think the shutdown caused by Covid-19 will likely last for at least three months. I want to assure the parents and students who are waiting for these celebrations, that they will take place: I

just can't tell you when. I will let you know when any decision is made about this matter as soon as possible through this website.

Please continue to check this website for any updates about news pertaining to and events happening at Holy Rosary Parish and share this information with other people. I will do my best to keep you informed in a timely manner.

On a personal note, everyone in the Rectory is healthy and as happy as they can be under the circumstances.

When I was studying for the Priesthood, I did a field placement at the Toronto East General Hospital. One of the ideas they stressed was what they called "holistic treatment"; each patient had to receive care for their physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs. A patient would arrive at the hospital with an infection and the doctors would prescribe the proper medication. Within a few days, the infection would clear up. Yet, the patient would still feel and act ill. Perhaps, the patient was afraid to go home because the last time he or she was discharged, the sickness returned. It might be the patient lived alone and dreaded that no one would care for him or her. Maybe, the patient saw the illness as a punishment from God and wondered if more suffering was coming. Included in this approach was the idea that care must be given to all those affected by an illness: the patient, his or her family and sometimes the doctors or nurses. Care was an all encompassing concept.

In today's Gospel, Jesus encounters a royal official who wants him to heal the man's young son. Christ's response was to provide care in a "holistic" way. According to the father, the boy was on the point of death. His physical recovery was complete. The man was emotionally upset by the peril facing his son, which intensified when Jesus did not respond in the desired way immediately. Christ's reassurance the boy would live enabled the man to return home with hope. The official, despite having authority, status and wealth, forgot his social position and begged for help. Jesus respected the man's dignity and demanded nothing in return for the healing. The father perhaps hearing about what Jesus had done in Jerusalem came to him with faith. Christ's words were enough to cause the man to believe and return home. Jesus recognized and cared for all the needs, not just of the boy, but of the father.

It is important to remember the victims of the Covid-19 pandemic are not simply those who contract it. There are the doctors and nurses who put all

their energy and expertise into keeping someone infected with the virus alive. There are the government officials who keep trying to find new ways to stop the spread of the virus only to have the daily totals of infected cases and death continue to rise. There are the families who are worried if their relatives trapped in another country are safe. There are children who must go 14 days without their mother or father tucking them into bed at night and not understanding why.

It is important the care provided during this crisis be “holistic”. We need to look after the physical needs of all those who have contracted the virus and insure the doctors and nurses have the resources to do so. We need to reassure those who have been overcome with fear, anxiety or suspicion because of Covid-19 that these feelings can go away if they trust God and others. We need to show others that social distancing does not mean social indifference. We need to show how faith will not drive away the virus but can help us learn how to cope with it.

You don't need to have medical training to become agents of healing during these times. You simply need to follow Christ's example; care for the whole person and care for all people.

Fr. Michael Basque