

## NOTES FROM FR. SEAN

March 22, 2020

### In Today's Gospel

This week, we begin the Fourth Week of Lent. In our readings today, we see two people who receive a special anointing from God. An anointing they neither asked for, nor expected, but which gave them each a great gift. In the first reading, Samuel was sent by God to anoint the next king of Israel. Nobody expected that the boy, David, out in the field with the sheep, would be that future king. David seemed like such an unlikely choice "because man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks to the heart." (1 Sam 16:7b)

In today's gospel, the man born blind does not ask to be healed. It is assumed by others that his blindness was a punishment for sin. Jesus heals the blind man "so that the works of God might be made visible through him." (Jn 9:3b) Let us pray that we may have our eyes opened. Let us pray that through Jesus Christ, we may see not as man sees, but as the Lord sees.

### Suspension of Mass and Public Events

By now, you are aware that the public celebration of Mass has been suspended within the Archdiocese of Detroit. This is a difficult step, but I believe that it is necessary if we are to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

In addition, all public functions at our parishes have been suspended. That includes Faith Formation classes for youth and all Adult Faith Formation programs, as well as bingo, fish fries, scout gatherings, the 50+ Club, etc. Currently, these suspensions will remain in effect until at least April 6<sup>th</sup>.

### The Church Is Still Open

Although we have suspended Mass and other public events, *the Church has not closed its doors*. For now, our offices remain open during our usual business hours. Our churches are also open. The church at St. Mary is open from **9 AM to 4 PM every day**. The church at St. Richard is open Monday through Friday, 9-11 AM. Everyone is welcome to come in for private prayer during those times. Please be mindful of the CDC's recommendations against gatherings of more than 10 people, and please maintain an appropriate separation between yourself and anyone else in the church.

### Livestreaming Mass

Archbishop Vigneron has granted a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday; however, we are not dispensed from our obligation to "keep holy the Sabbath." When you cannot participate in Mass on Sunday, you should still set aside time for prayer on Sundays. As part of that prayer, I recommend that you watch Mass, either on TV or on the Internet. We livestream two Masses every Sunday. **We have Mass at 11:30 AM in English, and 2 PM in Spanish.** We are in the process of setting up a YouTube channel, but you can also access the livestream directly at the following links: for the 11:30 AM Mass [zoom.us/j/941197167](https://zoom.us/j/941197167), for the 2 PM Mass [zoom.us/j/721881196](https://zoom.us/j/721881196). We will be posting these links on our Facebook page, as well as the St. Mary website. We will also be posting the recordings of the Mass online. For a complete listing of televised and online Masses in the Archdiocese, go to [www.aod.org/livemasses](http://www.aod.org/livemasses).

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**Reconciliation**

As a result of the suspension of all Masses and public gatherings, we have also cancelled the Lenten Penance Services but that does not mean confessions are cancelled. I am available by appointment for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and I will also be available in the church. I will be at St. Richard on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 9:30 - 10:00 AM and at St. Mary from 3:30 - 4 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays, and 3 - 4 PM on Saturdays.

**Sacrament of the Sick**

If you or a loved one needs the Sacrament of the Sick, please contact the parish office so we can make arrangements. Please be advised that some hospitals and nursing homes have restrictions on visitors, but arrangements can be made.

**Funerals**

Burying the dead is a corporal work of mercy and praying for those who have died is one of the most important things that we do in the Church. As such, we are still permitted to hold funeral Masses. We are limited to gatherings of no more than 10 people, and there will be no distribution of communion; however, it is important for both those who have died and those who remain that we have a funeral. It is acceptable to postpone the funeral to a later date. If you have lost a loved one, please coordinate with the funeral home and the parish to set up a funeral.

**Keeping In Touch**

We are taking advantage of modern technology to keep in touch with all parishioners. Please check the St. Mary website ([www.stmarywayne.org](http://www.stmarywayne.org)) or follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/StMaryWayne/](https://www.facebook.com/StMaryWayne/) or [www.facebook.com/St.RichardWestland/](https://www.facebook.com/St.RichardWestland/)) for updates. Bulletins will be available in the churches and online at the St. Mary website.

The simplest way of keeping in touch is through *Flocknote*. Flocknote is a text and email communications system used by many parishes. Signing up is easy-text SMSR to 84567 (or 202-765-3441 for Spanish) on your smartphone. You can also register online at [new.flocknote.com/SMSR](http://new.flocknote.com/SMSR).

**Hope**

In Romans 5:5, St. Paul tells us, "hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." We are living in uncertain times, but we must not give up hope. Hope is a theological virtue. It is the "theological virtue by which we desire the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promise and relying not on our own strength but on the help of the graces of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1817) During this time of uncertainty, we must do all that we can to take care of ourselves and our neighbors, but in the end, we must rely not on our own strength but on God. We must place our trust in Christ and rely on the grace of God. Pray for all those impacted by the coronavirus, and pray for hope, the hope that comes from God who is our light in the darkness.