

March 21, 2020

Dear Beloved Parishioners of St. Anthony,

May the peace of the Lord Jesus be with you all!

Tomorrow, I will be offering the Holy Mass of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent, for the health, safety, and growth in faith for our beloved parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua.

I know this is a very challenging time for all of us. I invite you to trust in the power of the Lord Jesus. After the Lord had completed His mission, and before He ascended from earth to heaven, He said these powerful words to His disciples: "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of time," (Matthew 28:20). Now more than ever, we must trust in our all loving, all powerful, and all merciful Lord. He is with us. What great comfort that gives us all – to know that the Lord will always be at our side leading us to our final home: heaven.

As we began Lent on Ash Wednesday, one of our challenges was to grow in trust. God brought the Israelites into the desert to liberate them from slavery. It meant that they had to surrender to the Lord God's providence, while passing through the hardships of purification. I invite all of us to grasp the loving hand of Jesus and trust in Him. He will always be faithful; we only have to surrender to His divine plan. These words from the Gospel of John always bring me confidence: "I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world," (John 16:33). Christ conquers. Evil, sickness, suffering: Christ conquers through His cross and resurrection. Trust in His words.

Trust is a form of hope, with the understanding that if we give all of our effort, God will give us the necessary grace to overcome apparently insurmountable trials. The best way to activate our trust is, to pray. Prayer strengthens; Prayer soothes; Prayer calms; Because prayer is grasping the hand of the Lord Jesus. Now more than ever, I invite you to be people of prayer – pray especially the holy rosary. If we persevere in prayer and commit our lives more fully to Christ, there is no doubt that the merciful Lord will intervene.

To help us take the Lord's hand, our leadership team has decided to open the Church from 4pm to 6pm Monday through Saturday. On Sunday, it will be open from 9am to 12noon – during that time, I will be available from 9am to 11am for drive up confessions in our parking lot (just pull up next to me in your car, and I would be happy to hear your confession).

Seek and you will find! Seek the Lord's comfort and peace, and you will find His hand waiting to embrace yours.

With my prayers for your safety and for an increase of faith in Christ,

Fr. Todd