



4690 Bald Eagle Ave.
White Bear Lake, MN 55110-3499

March 13, 2020 2:30 PM

RE: Statement on the Coronavirus and Preventive Measures Being Implemented

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Earlier today, Governor Tim Walz confirmed the fourteenth case of the Coronavirus (COVID - 19) in the State of Minnesota. I ask you to pray for the sick, their families, those impacted by the virus and our health care professionals.

As of today, we have no information that any person in the St. Mary of the Lake or Frassati Catholic Academy communities has the virus. However, in an abundance of caution, the parish has implemented several protocols at Mass to limit the possibility of the virus being transmitted. These include no holding hands at the Our Father, no shaking of hands at the Sign of Peace, no reception of Holy Communion from the chalice, and the strong encouragement that everyone receives the host in the hand. The most important point is that those who are sick stay home. As I have repeated many times, the obligation to attend Mass on Saturday/Sunday is dispensed (waived) when a person is sick or caring for someone who is sick.

SUNDAY MASS

On March 12, 2020, Archbishop Hebda issued a statement expanding the conditions for that dispensation <https://www.archspm.org/covid19>. He wrote: "Due to the increasing number of confirmed COVID-19/coronavirus cases in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, I determine it prudent to dispense all Catholics in the territory of this Archdiocese from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, until further notice. If the faithful decide that congregating for Sunday Mass would constitute a risk to themselves or others, they have the freedom not to attend. **Masses, however, will continue to be celebrated in our parishes as regularly scheduled at this time.**" Archbishop Hebda encourages those who stay home to watch Mass on television, read the Sunday readings, pray with the family or, if reasonable, attend a daily Mass during the week when the crowds are smaller.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

I will continue to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturdays at 9:00 AM. However, the location for confessions will be in the chapel, rather than the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

I am available to celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick, especially for those who are dying or facing major surgery.

FUNERALS

We will continue to celebrate funeral Masses. However, we may limit or prohibit gatherings at the church prior to and following the Mass.

FRASSATI CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Classes at Frassati Catholic Academy are scheduled to resume on Monday, March 16. Officials from the MN Department of Health and the MN Department of Education have not recommended closing schools. A separate communication has been sent to Frassati families and can be found at <https://frassati-wbl.org/>.

OTHER LITURGICAL EVENTS, PARISH GATHERINGS AND MEETINGS - CANCELED

In an abundance of caution, the parish is canceling all parish meetings and gatherings, other than those noted above. This cancellation includes Faith Formation classes, Sacramental Preparation classes, Stations of the Cross, and small faith sharing groups, whether those are held at the Parish Life Center, church, or parishioner homes. People involved in those ministries or events will be receiving a separate communication from the respective directors responsible for coordinating those ministries.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Information on our response to the COVID-19 can be found on the homepage of our parish website: <https://stmarys-wbl.org/>. You will find links to the CDC, MN Department of Health, the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Frassati Catholic Academy and other organizations. If you cannot find the answer on our website, please call the Parish Office at 651-429-7771 option 1.

BE A SIGN OF HOPE

As this public health issue continues to unfold, many people are anxious and afraid. Others, especially the elderly, are isolated and feel alone. Please pray for them. Pray for those who are sick, those caring for the sick, and those seeking a vaccine to the virus. Pray that God's wisdom would be granted to our local, state and federal officials in their work to protect and guide us.

As a follower of Jesus Christ, you are called to be the face of Jesus and the sign of Christian hope to those in your life. Remind people of God's love for them and the victory that has been won for us in Jesus Christ. Invite them to pray and ask for the Spirit's gifts of consolation and peace.

Mary, help of the sick, pray for us.
St. Joseph, Protector of the Church, pray for us.

Peace,



Fr. Ralph Talbot