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May 3, 2020

I was so excited when I received an email from our Bishop this past Friday afternoon, stating that we would be able to open the church again on Monday for private prayers and to celebrate the Mass, though only with 10 people. In collaboration, Deacon Fred, Patty, Diane, and I began making plans and phone calls to set things in motion. Then, yesterday afternoon (Saturday), I received a recanting of this good news. Because it is believed that Illinois has not yet reached the peak of the virus, it was ultimately determined that it may be detrimental to open up the churches at this time, no matter how few people attend.

It is heartbreaking when I see people kneeling in front of the church and I am unable to open the doors for them. I have experienced this more than once, but yesterday evening at 10:00 pm, there were two young girls who brought a mattress with blankets and were praying in front of the main doors. I never thought I would see this sight, and that I would not be able to let someone into the church who wants to pray.

In times like these, when we need God the most, it is difficult to maintain faith. Church is not just a building (though we do have a beautiful one). It is made up of many beautiful souls and smiles, and it is enlightening and heartwarming for us to see each other every weekend at Mass, and even during the week for many. Hopefully you are staying in contact somehow with your friends and family who are not quarantined with you. It is important to know that each of us is not alone, even if it feels like we are in a time of crisis like this.

Thank you for your emails, and for your support during this time. This is one example of an email I received from a parishioner:

“Once you started calling your mother don’t miss. I know as I get 6 calls a day at different times from my 6 kids. Last Sept. I prayed to our Blessed Mother and asked her to get Cheryl out of pain. I promised to say the rosary every day. On Dec. 8 Cheryl was out of pain. Early that day I was asking for the blessing of the sick. You called and ask me how long I was going to be there. I said I was going to stay the night. As busy as you were all day you said you will be there by 10:30 pm. That is when you became part of our family. As I pray the rosary every day for my family, you are right with them. One more thing, my Guardian Angel says hi. That prayer I always said as a kid. Now it comes in my head at all times of the day. When you said you went skiing, I mention it to a friend that you should always take some time for this, so you don’t burn out. I hope you are feeling better.”

God bless you.

*Fr. Slawek*