

CORONAVIRUS FINANCIAL IMPACT UPDATE TO PARISH - MARCH 31, 2020

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During this Coronavirus pandemic, I want you to know how much I, along with Father Ianelli, are united with you and your loved ones in prayer and in spirit. My heart aches as we are unable to celebrate the Eucharist together and to be with one another on so many occasions throughout the week, for what I hope, will be a brief time more. Although we are not able to be together in our beautiful church and chapel, so many of you have watched from the sanctuary of your homes the videotape of Sunday Mass or participated from home via Facebook Live in Daily Mass from the Saint Juan Bernadino Rectory Chapel. It means so much to Father and me, to keep our parish family connected.

We are trying to support you, our parishioners, in your spiritual journey of Lent through these new endeavors and by taking advantage of technology and the multi-media resources online and on our website. You are all remembered in a special way by Father and me in our daily prayers and Mass intentions. I encourage you to stay connected to the parish via our parish website and Flocknotes. We will continue to offer many creative ways for you and your family to nourish your spiritual lives during this most unique of Lents.

I am full of hope because of the so many beautiful ways in which our parish community has been reaching out and checking in on their neighbors. It seems that for at least the present time, the Lord is calling us to be Eucharist in so many other ways than the formal celebration of the Mass, such as: staying in touch with elderly relatives, friends and neighbors; offering to shop for them; pick up medicines or other necessities for them. Our Health and Wellness Committee has put together a list of volunteers who are helping in these deliveries. We can also prepare meals for families who have faced unemployment due to the crisis or help with the many collection programs for the poor that we already have within the parish. These are just a few ways and I am sure with your creativity there are many more ways to be Eucharist to others.

While this is indeed a health crisis that affects all of us, it is also a financial crisis for many of us. Many of our parishioners find themselves unemployed and are experiencing financial distress. To the extent that you are able, the parish also needs your help at this critical time. A

part of my pastoral responsibilities is to make you aware that our parish also is experiencing financial distress. The members of the Parish Finance Council, along with the full support of the members of the Parish Pastoral Council, are working hard to assist us as a parish get through this crisis, and I am confident that we will do that, but not without your help.

I call to your attention that in our short history we have not only survived in difficult times, but rather, we have flourished. How can we forget the challenge of being separated from our beloved mother parish, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the struggles and challenges of building our church, parish life center and courtyard, or the financial crisis of the stock market and real-estate sectors and the disheartening revelation of the church scandal, not only once, but twice. I truly believe that we survived and flourished as a parish community because of your steadfast love for our parish and the Catholic Faith.

The members of the Finance Council have asked me to speak with you in a very frank and honest manner regarding our situation and need for your help. It was just two short weeks ago that representatives from the Finance Council gave their Semi-Annual Financial Update after all the Masses. We elected to move forward with this address to be true to our mission of transparency and update you twice a year on our financial situation. At that time, the obligation associated with attending Sunday Mass was lifted by Archbishop Perez, due to the coronavirus, which was beginning to appear in Pennsylvania.

Our financial situation was looking strong as we were about to finish the third quarter of our fiscal year, which ends on June 30. Our collections were up over last year's numbers, spring was coming, Holy Week and Easter were around the corner. For the first time in our 20-year history, we were standing on solid financial ground. While we still had a little way to go to meet our weekly collection goal of 32 thousand dollars, the message was positive, and we were working to reach that goal by the end of next fiscal year.

Now in such a short span of time, with churches closed for the foreseeable future, lots has changed as you know very well. Within a few weeks, our main source of income, the weekly offertory, is in distress. While I want to reassure you that we are doing everything possible to re-evaluate our expenses by cutting back, as well as cutting altogether when necessary, still there are some monthly expenses which continue, on a regular basis. These include expenses associated

with: services and ministries to our parish community, payroll, insurances, utilities, taxes, and yes, mortgage payments. We need your help in continuing to fund our parish.

I want to stress here the need to keep the “OLG Difference” alive and well. Please consider signing up for Parish Giving to safely and securely donate weekly or monthly to the parish. The link can be found on the parish website, (<https://www.olguadalupe.org/give>). At this time of crisis, Parish Giving is truly the best way to support OLG. If you wish to use your parish envelopes, please use the drop box, which can be found at the entrance to the Parish Life Center (tall brown container by the glass entry doors) or simply mail your envelopes to the parish. (5194 Cold Spring Creamery Road, Doylestown, PA 18902)

We realize this is a trying time for all of us, so much is unknown, but we must continue to have faith in God, and faith in our parish community, which we have spent two decades building. We want it to endure and continue to be a “vibrant, welcoming parish family dedicated to growing disciples and making church matter” for many years to come.

To the extent that you can, please consider the continued support with your normal weekly, biweekly or monthly donation. Above all we need your prayers of support, as well as your financial resolve. We regret having to reach out with this request, but in our continued mission of transparency, we are letting you know that we are at risk of serious financial difficulty if we do not continue to receive all your donations.

As I’m sure you may already know, it saddens me to inform you that even our public liturgies for Holy Week have been suspended. While we cannot meet in person, as I mentioned we are doing our best to “meet virtually” by celebrating Mass privately and providing it to you via our parish website and/or via Facebook, which we will continue during the Liturgies of Holy Week. On a positive note, I am happy to announce a new and creative initiative, given our circumstances, and that is three local Marian parishes will be joining together for Holy Week. The priests and deacons of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will be joining us here at Our Lady of Guadalupe for the celebration of the Liturgies of Holy Week. Stay tuned as we make more information available to all three parishes.

Be assured of our continued prayers for all of you and your loved ones, our nation, and our world during the difficult times which we are facing. Father and I see beautiful and specific

examples throughout the week demonstrating that you are facing this crisis with great courage and Faith. We will get through this crisis, and we will be a better people, a better nation, a better world, because we will do our part in being a better parish.

I along with Father Ianelli look forward with great anticipation of coming together soon as a parish community to celebrate Mass again, with you in the pews. I believe that it will be just as glorious as the occasion of the Dedication of our parish Church on June 11, 2011. Thank you for taking the time to read this update.

Please stay healthy and stay safe by following the guidelines of our local, state and national governments, as well as the other agencies and institutions at work in helping us get through this pandemic. May our Blessed Mother, under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, watch over you and your loved ones and hold you in the mantle of her care. May the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit descend upon you, your households and your loved ones and remain with you during these difficult times and forever. Amen. With love and fond regard, I am

Devotedly Yours in Christ,

Reverend Monsignor Joseph P. Gentili
Pastor

Members of the Finance Council

Richard Clark, Chair
Thomas Rakszawski, Parish Business Manager
Laura Campbell
Timothy Conniff
William Conway
Paul Crovo
Peter Hawley
Philip Junker
Raymond Kalouche
Barbara Kieffer
Greg McGovern
Ellen Roehm
Michele Savage
Judy Wicklum
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Deacon Robert Brady