

**Letter from the pastor to the Parishioners of  
Blessed Sacrament Church by Father Benny Mekkatt**

All of a sudden, the world that has been moving in its fastest mode, has come to a sudden stop. Until recently, every person in the world seemed to be in a hurry to achieve more and more, every day or every moment. How often we get irritated when the car ahead of us doesn't move as fast as I expect or when someone taking an extra minute at the counter when we are waiting in line behind that person? Every time when you ask someone how are you doing, the most common response must be 'busy'. Yes, we have been too busy to do one more task or to drive one more mile or to cover one more area. We always complained that there wasn't enough time for anything and the 24 hours in a day is too short and we wished if only we had a couple more extra hours every day. This was the case until we all are asked to slow down and stay at home, work from home or being locked down all the activities of normal life. Even in my ministry, I myself was caught up with too many things to achieve every day. I came back from my vacation with hundreds of plans for Lent, Holy Week and Easter time. I was getting too excited about the upcoming pilgrimage to Poland, Germany and Prague and to watch the live Passion play in Oberammergau which takes place only once every ten years. All of a sudden, everything has turned upside down. All our schedules and plans are cancelled or suspended. We often wonder why?

I just happened to hear this story about man driving an expensive Mercedes Benz Maybach Exelero on a busy street. He was suddenly stopped by a stone hitting the side glass window and breaking the glass. He was shocked and backed up his car to check what had happened. He was furious to realize that a young boy standing on the side walk threw the stone at his car. The driver got out of his car and shouted at the boy and asked him why he did that. 'I was trying to get some help for my brother who has fallen from his wheel chair and he is lying on the concrete and I couldn't help him get back to his wheel chair. I tried to get the attention of all the drivers and nobody stopped and finally this is what I thought would stop the car.' The boy replied. The man's heart was moved with pity and compassion overtook his anger. He went ahead and helped the older boy who was semi-paralyzed to get back to his wheel chair and slowly walked back to his luxurious car with a heart full of emotions but not paying any more attention to the damage on his car and drove away.

Sometimes, we face hard realities in life to help us to slow down our busy life and look back in to the realities of life.

Now, everything has turned around. It seems the Lord has been trying everything possible to help us to slow down, but we didn't pay much attention and finally He had to use the hard hit. A simple virus stopping the entire world's functioning. How simple we are! More and more countries are being locked down and asking people to stay home, encouraging social distancing. For some, it would be a great chance to spend more quality time with your family. But for some, it may be really hard to be together and to be quiet. We can either feel too bad about the situation and be upset or we can turn it as an opportunity to strengthen your family bond and deepen and strengthen our faith in Christ. Let us make use of this time to rebuild our family which is the basic unity of the society and the church.

Here are a few thoughts I would like to share with you:

- Family is the domestic church. Parents, please don't be shy to organize moments of family prayers which might have been neglected because of our busy schedules. Remember; 'family that prays together, stays together.' We are still in the season of Lent.
- Parents become the catechists of your children making use of the available online materials.
- Start some family devotions like,
- Praying the holy rosary together,
- Praying the stations of the cross. If you are little creative, place all the fourteen stations of the Cross at different location inside or outside the house and do a stations of the cross every day.

- Watching the Mass on TV all together as the family and do exactly as you would do in the church at different parts of the Mass, like standing, sitting and kneeling etc. Then, receive the spiritual communion for now.
- Start spending a few extra minutes daily to read Sacred Scripture
- Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet either individually or as a family.
- Pray the Litany in Time of Need (Please check our website)
- Find enough time to read some good and inspiring books
- Make sure to check on your parents or grandparents through phone calls, Facetime, Zoom or Skype etc.
- Check on your neighbors and friends with regular phone calls and assure nobody is starving or short of basic items.
- Remember to eat healthy and do regular exercise to stay physically healthy and increase your immunity.
- Prayerfully consider supporting your parish with your prayers and generous contributions. (Please check the website to see various options).

Just like our thirst increases as we run short of drinking water, the deprivation of the public celebration of the Eucharist and other Sacraments should increase our thirst for the same. It is also a reminder for us in the future, not to take the participation in the Holy Eucharist for granted. Sometimes, we too may feel like Azariah the young man who was thrown into the furnace during the time of Babylonian exile. In the book of Daniel 3:38, we hear the agonizing prayer of Azariah, “we have in our day no prince, prophet or leader, no burnt offering, sacrifice, oblation or incense, no place to offer first fruits to find favor with you.” But in the next verse he continues placing his complete trust in God, “with contrite heart and humble spirit, let us be received. Deliver us in accord with your wonders and bring glory to your name, O Lord.”

Again, we all are so familiar with Psalm 23, “the Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me.”

It is true that we all miss going to the church and participating in the celebration of the Mass and other sacraments in addition to socialization and our parish community life. Let us try our best to stay calm and encourage others to be confident and optimistic during this time of difficulties. As one of our staff stated, “the whole world is in a long retreat.” It is a God-given time for us to recharge and refresh our lives in Christ Jesus to encounter and experience him in a more personal way. Soon, we will overcome the hardships and will get back to our normal life and return to the church to adore and worship Him in the Holy Eucharist as one family.

Let us remain united in prayer and may the grace of God overshadow you and protect you from all the illnesses and evil powers. Mary, Mother of good health, pray for us.