

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For weeks now, we have been living in moments of uncertainty. The coronavirus pandemic has affected us in many ways. Our usual daily life as we have known it has been changed. With Christ at our side, let us, together, do what we can to combat the threat that surrounds us. Faith in God is key! We need our faith in the Lord more than ever! He is the one that will help us fight this battle with His amazing grace and power. Seek to be strong in faith.

In this Sunday's second reading from ***Saint Paul to the Ephesians***, Paul says we must remain in the Light, that is Christ.

“Brothers and sisters: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of the light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.”

The threat of the coronavirus pandemic, and the growing uncertainties it causes may be a source of discouragement, we may feel “drained, impatient, angry and cynical.” So we must fight with prayer.

Recall Ash Wednesday and the ***Gospel of Matthew 6*** – **“When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your heavenly Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”**

Even though we cannot gather publicly for Mass and the celebration of the Sacraments and our Lenten devotions, we have prayer. Even if we doubt from time to time, surely, God has a plan for you and me. Trust in Him. Embrace Him. We need Him more than ever. Truly the Lord Jesus is the source of healing, he is our comfort, our consolation, and our guide. Let's turn to Him. As Saint Paul says,

“Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

Hopefully, by the month of April we will be able to gather in our church for the celebration of the Mass. I'm sure you join me in anxiously looking forward to that day. For now, let's pray, let's storm Heaven with our prayers, and beg the Virgin Mary, the help of Christians and health of the sick to intercede for us... that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

I want to take a moment, to personally thank all those who have continued to be so generous in your support for Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish and Immaculate Conception Parish during this time of crisis. Your effort, care, generosity and support is greatly appreciated.

For now, communication with all our parishioners will be through our parish website www.stmaryassumptionparish.org and through "BLAST EMAILS." If the Parish Office does not have your email address, please call Tricia at Assumption 815-634-4171 or Teri at Immaculate Conception 815-458-2125. Give us your email so that you can receive information and stay connected to things here.

As soon as it is possible, I look forward to welcoming you home to your parish.....May God Bless you and may the Blessed Mother keep you safe!

Blessings on our world, to you, and all those you love.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Nelsner". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.