

The Catholic Parishes of Eastern Wayne County

St. Michael's (Newark)

St. Joseph the Worker Parish (Lyons, Clyde, Savannah)

The Catholic Community of the Blessed Trinity (Wolcott, Red Creek)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In these trying times, we are forced to accept certain sacrifices not only to keep ourselves safe but to protect others as well. Respecting the recent directives of Bishop Matano and Governor Cuomo, as of Sunday evening, March 22, the following will be in effect until further notice in relation to the Catholic parishes of Eastern Wayne County:

- All public Masses are suspended.
- The April 1st Day of Penance is cancelled.
- Stations of the Cross and Holy Hours are cancelled.
- Our parish offices will be closed in the sense that normally no one will be allowed to physically enter them. However, our staff will still be monitoring the offices and working, if mostly from home. We will promptly respond to all emails and voice mail messages. We will be very accessible via phone.
- As for funerals, our clergy will hold graveside services for the deceased in our own Catholic cemeteries. We will not be able to do this if the cemetery is not under our control and does not allow it. Memorial Masses will be scheduled for a future date.
- Fr. Tedesche and Fr. Walter will be offering Mass every day, without the presence of the faithful, fulfilling their scheduled Mass intentions as well as praying for all those entrusted to their care.

Despite these sacrifices, we need to remember that we Catholics are still a spiritual family, the Body of Christ. Father Tedesche, Father Walter, Deacon Kiley, and the rest of the staff are still here to serve you, to pray for you, and to accompany you as you walk with Jesus, especially during this Holy Season of Lent. We are called to be people of prayer and we can look upon this time of self-isolation as a time to join ourselves more closely with God and with each other in spirit. Echoing Bishop Matano's words in his recent letters to the faithful, we are especially called to remember in prayer those in the health care field and those who are losing income because of serious financial disruption. This is a truly destabilizing time. People are scared. However, we remember that God is our rock and the center of our lives. It is to Him above all that we turn in times like this to find stability and security.

We must remember also that Sunday remains the Lord's Day and we should observe it to the best of our ability, given our limited options. Although it is not a substitute for attending Mass, EWTN broadcasts Mass and you are encouraged to prayerfully participate. Also, you can find a listing of local livestreamed Masses on the Catholic Courier's website at <https://catholiccourier.com/articles/list-of-parishes-with-live-streams-available>.

It should also be noted that as of Friday, March 20th, Bishop Matano has granted the faithful of the diocese of Rochester a dispensation from the law of abstinence from meat on the Fridays of Lent. He has done this to assist people who may have difficulties in shopping for food or other reasons which would make this practice difficult at this time.

Please also note that we are able to offer the following for your spiritual benefit:

- Two of our churches in the Eastern Wayne County cluster will be open from morning until evening for the faithful to visit for the purpose of personal prayer—St. Michael's in Newark

and St. John's in Clyde. Come and visit Our Eucharistic Lord in the Tabernacle. There will be booklets available for a private recitation of the Stations of the Cross.

- Our clergy and staff will be conducting pastoral visits via the phone, especially for those already on our shut-in lists.
- In-person pastoral visits will be done in case of necessity, especially the anointing of the sick and the last sacraments. Our priests will be conducting these visits only if they believe that they themselves do not have the virus and are therefore not going to spread it to others. When doing so, they will take into account the need to use various safety precautions (keeping distance, avoiding touching surfaces, wearing a mask, hand washing before and after the visit, etc.). Note also that your priests might have a hard time accessing some hospitals, so if at all possible, let us know if you need us to bring you the sacraments *before* you head into the hospital. Otherwise, we will try our best to reach you at the hospital or to make sure a priest chaplain visits you.
- Baptisms will be conducted at this time. Celebrations will be limited to parents and godparents, however, and will not exceed 10 persons in attendance.
- We will continue to publish our bulletins. You will be able to find them first of all on our parishes' websites. Also, physical copies of St. Michael's Newark bulletin will be available at the entrance of St. Michael's church and office porch. Copies of St. Joseph the Worker's bulletins will be available at the main entrance of St. John's in Clyde. Copies of Blessed Trinity's bulletins will be available in a special place at the entrance to St. Mary Magdalene in Wolcott.
- Fr. Tedesche and Fr. Walter will be hearing confessions during holy week in Newark, Clyde, and Wolcott. We will use the sacristies to do this, taking special precautions recommended to us by the bishop. More on this later.
- We will be publishing our Holy Week Mass times so that the faithful can unite themselves in prayer with their clergy from home. Again, more on this later.
- Our parishes websites and Facebook pages will be updated regularly. We will try our best to keep people updated.

In closing, please remember that you are not alone. We are all a part of the Body of Christ, united as one in the One who gave his life so that we might live! As Pope Francis tells us: "In the present situation, in which we find ourselves living, more or less isolated, we are invited to rediscover and deepen the value of the communion that unites all the members of the Church." And, remember the words of Jesus our Savior at the end of the Gospel of Matthew: "*Peace, do not be afraid... know that I am with you always.*" (Matthew 28)

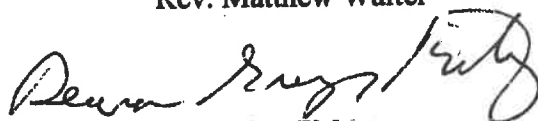
In Christ our Lord,



Rev. David Tedesche



Rev. Matthew Walter



Deacon Gregory Kiley