



Church of St. John the Evangelist Greece, New York

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March 18, 2020

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Although it is difficult to say, after consultation with public health officials, Bishop Salvatore Matano, announced on Monday, March 16, 2020, that the public celebration of Masses in the Diocese of Rochester, has been suspended until further notice due to COVID-19, Coronavirus Disease. It was a difficult decision but I know it had to be done in the best interest of our physical health and wellbeing. During the time we are unable to gather as a community of faith, I, as your Pastor, want to stay in touch with you.

We are often tempted to try and measure our faith; to quantify it and compare it. We want to fulfill our Sunday obligations. A quote often attributed to Mother Teresa of Calcutta says; *"God has not called me to be successful; God has called me to be faithful."* In the face of the threat of suffering and death from Coronavirus, the Church, in its wisdom, has decided to protect us. We, too, by God's grace are called to be faithful most especially during difficult times.

As your Pastor, I encourage you to read the Gospels, pray with your families and stay connected to St. John's during your physical absence by participating in Mass through our parish Facebook page, EWTN at 8 am or 10 NBC at 5:30 am. Let us keep each other in our prayers. Please be assured that all requested Masses through our parish will be honored on the day it was requested; the only difference is the priest will celebrate the Mass in church, in private, as directed by Bishop Matano.

Our parishioner, Jill Finan, posted this on her Facebook page: *"I plan to mail in my offering each week and urge my fellow parishioners to do the same. It's tough enough for parishes to make a go of it these days; we need to do our part even if necessary precautions prohibit us from attending Mass in person. Where you live, whatever your denomination, if your church is having to suspend services, too please consider doing this. We have to help. In His Name."* As alternatives to mailing in your offering, you could drop off your offering to the Parish Office during the day or through the mail slot in the front office door after hours, or you might consider setting up online giving which can be done through our website or by contacting our Business Office for help in doing so. Church bulletins are available on line or at the Parish Office at the Rectory.

Effective immediately our church will be open from 9 am till noon Mon, Wed, and Fri for people to come and say a private prayer. Our parish staff remains committed to serving the needs of our Beloved St. John parishioners during these challenging times according to the best of our abilities.

You are in my prayers and until we meet again, may our good and gracious God bless you.

Sincerely,

Fr. Peter Enyan-Boadu,
Pastor