

An atheist was spending a quiet day fishing on Loch Ness. Suddenly his boat was attacked by the legendary monster. In one easy flip the beast tossed the man and his boat high into the air. Then it opened its mouth to swallow both. As the man tumbled head over heels in the air, he cried, "Oh my God! Help me!" At once the ferocious attack froze in place. Time stood still with the atheist suspended in midair. Then a booming voice came down from the clouds: "I thought you didn't believe in me!" "Come on God, give me a break!" the man pleaded. "Two minutes ago I didn't believe in the Loch Ness monster either!" COULD SOMEONE PLEASE CUE THE LAUGH BACKGROUND!

So you get me virtually! Thanks for tuning in! I miss you – I especially miss being at Mass with you. I said to one of my priest friends this week that we spent our whole lives trying to get people to come to church – and now we tell them to stay away! It's odd. But this is the moment we find ourselves in. And, like all moments, it too is a God moment. Although a very challenging God moment.

When Jesus faced His suffering and death, the apostles were confused and lost. But He gave them the gift of His Body & Blood. After He had risen, He again left them. And once again, they were overwhelmed and paralyzed: "Why do you stand there staring at the sky?" the angel asked them when Jesus had disappeared into the clouds at His ascension. But once again, He gave us a gift – the Gospels – which were written in the light of great loss. So we know by faith that our hope in the kingdom does not give us a road map. It gives us a story. And the story gives us hope. The Church was born in a crisis. Crises are our *specialite de la maison*.

If we approach this crisis with an open heart, it has the potential to renew us. And I believe that there will be gifts that come from this crisis as well. Just the fact that we have had to all jump off our speeding treadmills for a while and spend more time at home is one of them. The crisis that we are living through now is just one more in a long line of them. So we do not give up hope. We do not give in to the voices of despair or hoarding, or failing to share what we have with those who are – now especially – in great need. When any of us face a crisis, it reveals a great deal about who we truly are. I'm confident that our walk with Christ will be deepened as we travel a journey with this virus. DO NOT LOSE HOPE!

I suggest that you pray at home as a family. Remember that our tradition teaches that the home is the DOMESTIC CHURCH, a place of prayer and ongoing formation. Your AT HOME WITH THE WORD books can be a great way to pray together. Just keep it simple, so all can participate. Everyone could share 1 thing from the readings that struck them.

Please plan on joining us at some point each weekend for our broadcast of the Sunday Mass. You can do so at your convenience – that's something you never had available before! And you can do so in your jammies!

The Lenten book that we gave you can also be a great help. BIBLE BASICS FOR CATHOLICS is a fun read.

Pray the rosary together as a family.

At the dinner table each day, have everyone share their highs and lows. This will keep family communication going well, and since everyone is not running off to someplace, there is the time to do this with more leisure and intention than when we are at 'life as usual.'

Pray for those who are sick with the virus, the elderly, those who are caring for the sick, all medical personnel and those researching the virus, and all those who are in leadership trying to contain it.

Pray for those who are isolated and have no one to reach out to them.

Reach out to assist your neighbors. Make more phone calls than usual.

Please remember that our parish mission and outreach to the poor continues. Brown Bag continues. Western Wake and Catholic Charities continues, etc. Also, THANK YOU for the huge pile of donations you brought for that! Your generosity is always humbling to me.

Also, please remember that we need your ongoing support so that we will be here for you when this has run its course. We are still visiting the hospitals, doing funerals and supporting folks through the grieving process. We're still receiving persons into the church! (Just in a much simpler way). We're still paying bills, mortgage, etc. If you are still employed, and are able to help us out with some extra support, it would be greatly appreciated. And thank you for what you always do. Hope to virtually see you again next week!

{Here is a prayer that you might wish to use during communion when you watch our podcast of the Mass. We can be connected in prayer and spirit, even if not physically.

"All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another." (Guidelines for the reception of Communion, USCCB). St. Thomas Aquinas once defined a Spiritual Communion as "an ardent desire to receive Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament and in lovingly embracing Him as if we had actually received Him." St. Teresa of Avila wrote: "When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed upon you." (THE WAY OF PERFECTION, Ch. 35)