



ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CHURCH

75-5769 Ali'i Drive • Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740
PH: (808) 326-7771 • Email: stmichaelarchangel@rcchawaii.org
Website: stmichaelparishkona.org

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Dear Parishioners:

Our world has turned upside down these last two weeks. The fight to halt the spread of the coronavirus has led St. Michael's Parish and our Diocese to make some difficult decisions about how we practice our faith. (See the attached memo from Bishop Silva entitled, "Updated General Directives and Liturgical Guidelines Due to the COVID-19.") The thought of not being able to attend Mass to receive the Precious Body and Blood as a result of this pandemic is devastating. And with the cancellation of parish activities and the Statewide shutdown, this crisis will prevent us from enjoying our usual connection with members of the faith community.

Right now, it may seem challenging to remain a faithful steward. We may even question our faith and wonder how to find God during these turbulent times. Where do we turn?

During this very difficult time, I encourage you to turn to the Church's treasury of *prayer*. Take time each day to read the daily Scripture Readings – they can be found at USCCB.org, then select the calendar date on the home page. Also use the many rich resources of our faith to engage in spiritual reflections each day as an individual and with your family. This can include praying the *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* a few times a day, as well as praying the Rosary, the Liturgy of the Hours, and Stations of the Cross. Many resources for these are easily found online.

It is important to remember that although we cannot physically attend Mass, Sunday remains a holy day, and I encourage you to pray. Participate in prayer by way of televised or livestreamed Mass: "attend" Mass with Bishop Larry Silva by going to the Diocesan website catholichawaii.org, under "News and Events" click on *Read More* to get the links to find the times to view the Mass; or go to wordonfire.org/daily-mass for Mass with Bishop Robert Barron. I encourage you to make a Spiritual Communion, which can be found on the back of this letter.

We must also find ways to use our talents to serve God. Right now may not be the time for you to serve others in the parish or community, but you can use your talents to serve your family and those who are closest to you. Something as simple as calling to check on family and friends – even doing a video call – can go a long way to feel connected.

Finally, we must remain good stewards of our treasure. Changes that are taking place are impacting our parish families in different ways. Some of you may have lost your job or seen a reduction in work hours and pay as a result of this crisis. Despite our hardships, and though we may not be able to bring our gifts to the Altar, we still must faithfully try our best to return a portion of our treasure to God, however He is calling you do to so. No matter the situation, God always remains faithful to us.

Remember that everything God gives us is a gift, and the way in which we share our gifts with God and our neighbor is ultimately how we give Him glory. I will continue to pray for you and our entire parish family during this difficult time. I plan to regularly communicate with all of you via our website with additional information and resources. Thank you so much for your support of St. Michael's Church. You are in my thoughts and prayers daily; God bless you.

Gratefully in Christ,

Fr. Lio Faletoi, Pastor