



ST. RAPHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

CATHOLIC CHURCH

830 S. Westhaven Dr. | Oshkosh, WI 54904 | 920 233 8044 | raphael.org

March 17, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

These days certainly are unlike any others most of us have experienced. We want to keep you up-to-date in terms of our parish community and our spiritual lives during this time.

Effective Friday, March 20, Bishop Ricken has **suspended all public attendance at Masses** through at least mid-April. Bishop Ricken assures us that not attending Mass during a national health emergency like this is not sinful.

Priests will continue to celebrate Mass privately during this time, and we will certainly be praying for everyone during this difficult time.

St. Raphael Church will remain open for private prayer every day. The church will be open 7 am–7 pm Monday through Friday, 8 am–6 pm on Saturday, and 10 am–6 pm on Sunday. We encourage people to come and pray privately. We will have some prayer materials, such as Stations of the Cross booklets, available. Per CDC guidelines, we recommend people keep a distance of 6 feet between themselves and others while praying in church, and be mindful of the number of people in the space. The CDC guidelines strongly recommend less than 10 people in an area. We have the sanctuary, Blessed Sacrament Chapel, and St. Martin Chapel available.

The parish office will remain open, with normal hours of 8:30–4:30 pm. Please call (920) 233-8044 or email parish.office@raphael.org any questions or concerns you have.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) will continue to be offered at the normal times: Tuesdays from 4:30 to 5:30 pm, Saturdays from 3:30–4:30 pm, and Sundays from 3:30–4:30 pm. During Lent we will also offer Reconciliation Saturday mornings 8–9 am.

All other events and services are canceled. This includes the fish fry, RE, adult faith formation, meetings, choirs, small groups, etc.

This is going to be a difficult time, and we will be without the Eucharist during this time. We are not able to offer communion to people except in danger of death. **Spiritual communion** is a prayer expressing our desire for Holy Communion, the Eucharist, in times when we are not able to receive Him. St. Thomas Aquinas defined a Spiritual Communion as “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and in lovingly embracing Him as if we had actually received Him.”

Mass will be available via TV, radio, and online. Our Sunday 9 am Mass from St. Raphael will continue to be on the radio, 1490 WOSH. We will also livestream it on our St. Raphael Facebook page. [Click here](#) for additional remote access options for Mass.

When it comes time for communion during that or another Mass, you may make an Act of Spiritual Communion. [Click here](#) to view the prayer.

We are working on plans to keep in touch with our parishioners who are older senior citizens. If you would be willing to help check on people via telephone, or possibly deliver needed items such as food, please let us know.

We will be working in the coming days on a plan to keep in touch with our parishioners in a variety of ways.

We will also be finding ways to communicate with you and provide spiritual resources.

This will be a difficult time for many. Let us pray for all who are or will be ill with the virus, and for all in health care professions who will be working very hard to bring healing.

As with so many households and businesses, this will be a difficult time financially for our parish as well. In a separate communication, we will share ways to give your offerings online or through Electronic Fund Transfer. We can always receive contributions via the mail or in person as well.

On Thursday, March 19, Bishop Ricken is beginning a year of prayer in honor of St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church. Let us seek his intercession for all people as we enter into this difficult time. St. Joseph, *pray for us!*

Please know of my prayers each day for you.

Gratefully,

Fr. Tom Long
Pastor