



Catholic Strategies COVID-19 Response for Dioceses *Sample direct mail letter from a pastor to parishioners*

My dear parish family,

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe, in good health, and enduring these unsettling days of quarantine with faith and hope. This historic COVID pandemic has required us all to make enormous sacrifices to protect the health of our community. I hope you and your family are adjusting to these circumstances and that you are experiencing the comfort of God's faithful presence every day.

Among the many ways this crisis has had an impact on all of us, the suspension of public Masses is most difficult. I know how much you miss the opportunity to gather together as a parish family for worship, and especially to receive the Eucharist. But we know we will be together again in our beloved church, and God willing, that day will come soon. In the meantime, *[if you are live-streaming mass, include viewing information here] [if you are not live-streaming mass: remember that you are foremost in my prayers as I celebrate daily private Masses for your intentions.]* I hope you are praying a prayer of spiritual communion often, and that you are comforted by the constant presence of our Lord, even when you cannot receive him physically.

Many of you have called or emailed to ask how I'm doing, and said that you miss me. I miss you, too! I want you to know how grateful I am for your concern. *[Insert a sentence or two about how you are personally faring during the crisis.]* You also have asked about the well-being of our wonderful parish *[and school]* staff. I can assure you we're all taking every precaution to protect our health, while at the same time, working hard to provide what pastoral care we can during this crisis. *[If applicable: Our school staff is working especially hard to assure that our XXX (number) of students continue their studies through remote learning. It's a big challenge and they are all rising to it magnificently!]*

It is my concern for our employees that prompts me to write to you. As you know, our operating budget relies on the revenue we receive in our weekly offertory collection. Without that, we are falling short of our budget and this means we are at risk of being unable to pay our staff members. I'm asking everyone to either mail in your regular contribution for the month in each month this goes on, or better yet, go to our online giving page at [\[URL\]](#) and sign up to begin regular electronic donations to the parish. Doing this will ensure that we can get through this crisis now, but also will help us have greater financial stability in the future. I can't stress enough how important it is that you continue to support our parish if you can.

Of course, many people are being financially affected by the COVID crisis with lost jobs and declining business. We know that may affect your contribution. If you are experiencing financial difficulty, please know of my prayers that your situation will soon improve. If you are in a financial crisis, please contact *[Catholic Charities or other local resource]*.

Attending to your pastoral needs is a great concern of mine. I know that this crisis is causing fear and anxiety, two things our Lord does not want us to experience. I urge you to go to your Bible and revisit those passages where God reminds us that, even in the midst of fear and turmoil, he is walking with us and holding us close to him..

Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God.
I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

O Most High, when I am afraid, in you I place my trust.
Psalms 56:4

For God did not give us a spirit of fear but rather of power and love and self-control.
2 Timothy 1:7

Finally, I urge you to go online to see the many ways in which priests and others in ministry are trying to support you during this crisis. From live-streamed and taped Masses to virtual Scripture studies, encouraging social media posts to live-streamed rosaries, there are a variety of resources to help you stay connected with Jesus and his Church. You and your family can make this a meaningful time in your spiritual journeys as, together, we wait to be reunited as a parish family. *[Include any links you want to share with your parishioners.]*

Thank you for your prayers, your faithfulness, and your support. May the Lord bless and keep each of you and your loved ones during this challenging and historic time.