



Church of Saint Anthony

331 Seward Place • Schenectady, New York 12305 • 518/374-4591

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of darkness a light has dawned.” These words from Isaiah the Prophet are among the scripture readings proclaimed on Christmas Day Mass.

My dear Parishioners of St. John’s and St. Anthony’s Churches: What a comfort the above-stated words from the good Lord Himself can be for us. What a challenge they can be as well. Why so? Because of the question that often comes from us when we are told that God is-with- us. We ask: *Where is He?* Where is He in the midst of all the world’s suffering at this time of the global Corona virus pandemic?

My answer to that understandably human question is: He is with us in His *care for us*. He is with us in *our care for one another*. He is with us in *our care for ourselves*.

What do most of you feel at this time of crisis? I suspect that you feel as I do: helpless, powerless, lost, desperate, and lonely. However I do not believe that I have these feelings for myself only. I feel that I have them for those who are hurting the most at this epoch time in world history of human pain, sadness, sorrow, and especially apprehension and fear.

A lot has changed for the entire civilized world in the past few weeks. We have seen our daily routines compromised and have been mandated to stay at home and practice social distancing. The current pandemic has even forced the cancellation of all Masses and parish gatherings of any size. These stipulations are in place to minimize the public exposure to this horrendous disease, which has been dubbed by President Trump as *our invisible enemy*.

Therefore I want to share with you how both our beloved parishes are responding.

While the celebration of public Mass has not been allowed us – a prohibition in my view that is a wise and prudent one – nonetheless St. Anthony’s Church is open for private prayer and reflection Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM. and St. John’s is open for the same from 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday through Friday, on Saturdays from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM and Sundays 6:30 AM to 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Church offices will be open with limited hours. Please call the office for times.

We care very much about the well-being of our parishioners and staff, and we are taking steps to protect and prevent the spread of the Corona virus.

We are deep cleaning both churches’ facilities for everyone’s protection.

To say we have a challenging year ahead for both of our parishes would be an understatement. At a recent meeting of St. Anthony’s Festa 2020 Planning Committee in review of the realities of the pandemic facing our country at this time, the painstaking decision was made to cancel this year’s Festa. Large crowds are prohibited throughout the entire country and this will likely continue for several months.

Were the Festa to occur, disruptions in the food supply chain, the sizable upfront costs, and the lead time needed to prepare the many food items offered at the Festa would be difficult and risky under the current circumstances. Perhaps most importantly, many of our volunteer workers are in one of the more vulnerable categories: Senior Citizens. Therefore we needed to make a socially responsible decision in this matter.

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St. Anthony's also had to cancel its planned Palm Sunday Bake Sale this year.

Unfortunately I must now write about a very touchy subject, and I will do it with as much thoughtfulness and sensitivity for you and your life situation as I can. Because of what is happening all around us, both St. Anthony's and St. John's Churches are going to be financially strapped over what is likely to be the next few months. Only the good Lord Himself knows what is going to be happening in the foreseeable future. However, with the public celebration of Masses temporarily suspended and thus with no more weekend collections, both parishes are facing challenging financial realities. While neither church is in debt – and we thank God for that – if the churches are still not allowed resuming Masses over the next 3 months, deficit spending will kick in. In fact, albeit in a small measure, it already has begun to happen.

Be that as it may, having served at both parishes for almost 19 years, I know you the parishioners to be strong, dedicated, and courageously possessing of that indomitable spirit to continue our legacies and our long histories. To each and every difficult time you have responded with true devotion and dedication for our churches. As Pastor it is nothing short of amazing for me to behold!

Thus I am asking that each of you continue to support your beloved church by sending your weekly offerings by mail or dropping them off at the church office. Your ongoing participation is needed for us to continue to meet the spiritual needs of St. John's and St. Anthony's Churches.

So until we meet again in person, let us continue to pray for our public safety and medical professionals and for those families that are dealing with the effects of the virus.

Please be assured of my daily prayers for you and your loved ones. And as our Holy Father +Pope Francis always ask of all of us, I ask of you the same: *Please don't forget to pray for me.*

Fr. Carlino
Palm Sunday 2020

Beginning this weekend of Palm Sunday and continuing every weekend until the return of the public celebration of Masses, I will be offering a Mass on YouTube so you will be able to celebrate with me by watching it.

I will do my best to alternate these celebrations between St. Anthony's and St. John's Churches.

To view the Masses, beginning 4 PM every Saturday until and including 5 PM every Sunday:

- 1. Access the Internet on your Computer, Tablet, or Cell Phone.**
- 2. Use your search engine (Google, Bing, etc.) to go to the YouTube website.**
- 3. The Masses will be on the following YouTube channel: St John - St Anthony Church Schenectady.**
- 4. Click on the Mass date for the video.**