



Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church



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YOU CAN WATCH US ON:

<https://www.facebook.com/SSPeterPaulBraddock/> or

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YOU CAN SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO PARISH OFFICE

ADMINISTRATOR: FATHER VITALII STASHKEVYCH

PARISH OFFICE: 4200 HOMESTEAD DUQUESNE RD, MUNHALL, PA, 15120

TELEPHONE: 412-461-1712

Sunday, March 29th, 2020

Tone 1

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SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES FOR THIS WEEK:

Sunday	03/29/2020	11:00 AM	5 th Sunday of The Great Fast	+Pauline Massa (On-Line) By Daniel & Monica Gazzo
Friday	04/03/2020	06:30 PM	Nicetas Venerable-Confessor	Liturgy of Presanctified Gift (On-Line)
Sunday	04/05/2020	11:00 AM	Palm Sunday	(On-Line) For Parish Family

SICK AND SHUT-INS Please remember in your prayers our parishioners who are sick, homebound, hospitalized, living in nursing facilities, or need your prayers for their personal intentions:

Andrew Cencarik, Don Downey, Phillip Fall, Anna D. Fialkovich, Mark Fialkovich, Benjamin Kaefer, Jr., John Kopay, Jr., Sylvia Kopay, Mary Anne Ference Mistick, Richard Paloscko, Nancy Pcolar, Bob Newton, Rebecca McCullough, Will McCullough Shirley Carmony Torbich, Marie Churley, Joanne Skinta, John Gegick and Those serving in the Armed Forces, Gerry Petticca and Family, Mark Zafaras.



****If you have a family member in the hospital or other facilities, and would like us to remember them in prayer, contact Father Vitalii and we will be glad to publish their name in the bulletin – even if they are not a parishioner of Saints Peter & Paul Parish.**

NICETAS THE CONFESSOR



Our venerable father Nicetas the Confessor was a monk during the 9th century who was a defender of the veneration of icons. He became abbot of the Mydicia monastery and was imprisoned for his opposition to iconoclasm.

Life

Under the upbringing of his grandmother, St. Nicetas grew as a pious youth, eventually joining the Mydicia monastery. The igumen of this monastery was Saint Nicephorus. Nicetas grew so virtuous in his monastic habit that his fame attracted many to the monastery who wanted achieve salvation. The saint was chosen as igumen of the monastery upon St. Nicephorus' death.

The iconoclast heresy was gaining power when Nicetas became head of the monastery, and its oppressive practices were only increasing. Nicetas was granted the gift of wonderworking at this time. After Emperor Leo the Armenian (r. 813-820) tried to convert monastery leaders to heresy, Nicetas stood strong in opposition. As a result, the igumen was imprisoned. He was then tricked into a false communion by the iconoclasts, in which afterward he repented the deed and only stood stronger against the heretics. He was imprisoned for another six years for defended the veneration of icons.

In 824, St. Nicetas reposed in the Lord. He was buried at the monastery and his relics became a source of healing.

Peter, John and James had a mountaintop experience with Jesus by witnessing His transfiguration. We too can have a mountaintop experience when we open our minds and hearts to following God's Will for our lives. If you think God is calling you to be a priest, religious or deacon, contact Fr. Vitalii Stashkevych.



PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

The **Byzantine Catholic Serra Club of Pittsburgh** is an organization that fosters and promotes priesthood and religious vocations in the Byzantine Catholic Church. They also support Seminarians, Priests and Religious Sisters in their sacred ministry. The Byzantine Serra Club meets monthly. If you would like to join, call William Kress 412-761-1499 or email kb.kress@gmail.com
Join the Serrans in their work to ensure the future of our Church.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear parishioners!

If you are going to send your contribution to parish office please include your envelopes and write amount on them. It will help to quickly put them on record. We are printing our bulletins on Wednesday night. All envelopes received after Wednesday will go to the following Sunday. Thank You!

OUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH, MARCH 22ND, 2020:

SUNDAY OFFERING	\$ 400.00
CANDLES	36.00
MONTHLY	70.00
HILODAY FLOWERS	30.00
Easter Flowers	15.00
CHURCH OF EAST EUROPE	50.00
TOTAL	\$ 601.00

CATHOLIC TEACHING

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

"No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" This knowledge of faith is possible only in the Holy Spirit: to be in touch with Christ, we must first have been touched by the Holy Spirit. He comes to meet us and kindles faith in us. By virtue of our Baptism, the first sacrament of the faith, the Holy Spirit in the Church communicates to us, intimately and personally, the life that originates in the Father and is offered to us in the Son.

Baptism gives us the grace of new birth in God the Father, through his Son, in the Holy Spirit. For those who bear God's Spirit are led to the Word, that is, to the Son, and the Son presents them to the Father, and the Father confers incorruptibility on them. and it is impossible to see God's Son without the Spirit, and no one can approach the Father without the Son, for the knowledge of the Father is the Son, and the knowledge of God's Son is obtained through the Holy Spirit.

Through his grace, the Holy Spirit is the first to awaken faith in us and to communicate to us the new life, which is to "know the Father and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ." But the Spirit is the last of the persons of the Holy Trinity to be revealed. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian, explains this progression in terms of the pedagogy of divine "condescension":

The Old Testament proclaimed the Father clearly, but the Son more obscurely. the New Testament revealed the Son and gave us a glimpse of the divinity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit dwells among us and grants us a clearer vision of himself. It was not prudent, when the divinity of the Father had not yet been confessed, to proclaim the Son openly and, when the divinity of the Son was not yet admitted, to add the Holy Spirit as an extra burden, to speak somewhat daringly.... By advancing and progressing "from glory to glory," the light of the Trinity will shine in ever more brilliant rays.

To believe in the Holy Spirit is to profess that the Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, consubstantial with the Father and the Son: "with the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified." For this reason, the divine mystery of the Holy Spirit was already treated in the context of Trinitarian "theology." Here, however, we have to do with the Holy Spirit only in the divine "economy."

The Holy Spirit is at work with the Father and the Son from the beginning to the completion of the plan for our salvation. But in these "end times," ushered in by the Son's redeeming Incarnation, the Spirit is revealed and given, recognized and welcomed as a person. Now can this divine plan, accomplished in Christ, the firstborn and head of the new creation, be embodied in mankind by the outpouring of the Spirit: as the Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT"

"No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." Now God's Spirit, who reveals God, makes known to us Christ, his Word, his living Utterance, but the Spirit does not speak of himself. the Spirit who "has spoken through the prophets" makes us hear the Father's Word, but we do not hear the Spirit himself. We know him only in the movement by which he reveals the Word to us and disposes us to welcome him in faith. the Spirit of truth who "unveils" Christ to us "will not speak on his own." Such properly divine self-effacement explains why "the world cannot receive (him), because it neither sees him nor knows him," while those who believe in Christ know the Spirit because he dwells with them.

The Church, a communion living in the faith of the apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit: in the Scriptures he inspired; in the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses; in the Church's Magisterium, which he assists; in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ; in prayer, wherein he intercedes for us; in the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up; in the signs of apostolic and missionary life; in the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.)

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

We welcome anyone to become a parishioner of Sts Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church. Only those who are registered are considered members of the Parish. When one registers to become a parish member, they assume the responsibility of rendering stewardship of time, talent and treasure to this parish family. Worship at this parish is always expected. Registration is done only by the pastor.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT: BOOK OF ISAIAH



The book of Isaiah is best understood through its characters. The key players in its saga loom large: the LORD, Israel, Isaiah, King Ahaz, King Hezekiah, Assyria, Sennacherib and Babylon.

The whole book functions as a covenant lawsuit. The LORD brings suit against Israel for its infidelity to the covenant he made with the nation in the time of Moses. In chapter one, the prophet calls witnesses and begins leveling accusations against Israel. Isaiah himself functions as the LORD's mouthpiece in the trial.

Isaiah is the court prophet and chronicler in the times of these kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Ahaz plays the largest role of the four kings. His unfaithfulness to the LORD centers on the trajectory of his political decisions. The LORD wants Israel to rely solely on His providence, but Ahaz seeks foreign alliances. This is where a few other key characters sneak into the story. Assyria was the dominant political power in the Near East in the 8th century BC. Since Assyria's dominance threatened surrounding nations, Syria and Ephraim (Ephraim is the name for the ten northern tribes of Israel.) decide to make an alliance and they threaten to take over Judah. Ahaz is afraid, but Isaiah prophesies that he should remain calm and trust in the LORD (7:7). Instead, Ahaz sends tribute to Assyria calling himself the "servant" and "son" of the king of Assyria (2 Kgs 16:7). Ironically, in 732 BC Assyria does save Judah from Ephraim and Syria by attacking their capitals, Damascus and Samaria (2 Kgs 16:9, 17:6). Yet Ahaz's failure to trust in the LORD draws a sharp rebuke from the prophet and Isaiah prophesies Judah's demise at the hands of the Assyrians.

Now things get sticky. The LORD did not want the alliance, but can't bear to destroy Jerusalem just yet. Assyria under the leadership of Sennacherib sweeps down from the north in 701 BC and destroys all the towns of Judah except Jerusalem while Hezekiah is king of Judah. By the LORD's miraculous intervention, Jerusalem is saved, handing a defeat to the mighty Assyrians (37:36). Sennacherib even gets assassinated by his own sons. Yet the LORD is still displeased with Israel's unfaithfulness.

Hezekiah blunders by showing the envoys of the king of Babylon all his treasure. They had sought political alliance with Judah, but after seeing the treasure, opt for conquest of Judah instead. Isaiah gives an ominous prophecy of impending doom to Hezekiah for his foolish ostentation (39:5-7). Later on (605 BC), Babylon does conquer Judah and takes the Jews as captive slaves.

So, how does the contemporary reader learn from Isaiah? Two simple lessons come to mind. First, God fulfills his word. In Isaiah, the LORD foretells many events and they come to pass. Through Isaiah, the LORD speaks of destruction and judgment, but also of salvation and redemption. On all counts, he delivers. Therefore, we can trust in his word for he is always faithful. Second, God's plan incorporates all mankind. Many times in the book of Isaiah, the prophet speaks of a jubilant day when all nations will come to worship the LORD at Jerusalem, on Mt. Zion (cf. 25, 66). This awesome day of feasting and celebration is the goal toward which all history tends. In the end, God wins and we share in his victory. From a Christian perspective, this goal is won by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the true son of David and root of Jesse (11:1).

Isaiah's prophecies are so important for the NT that some of the church fathers referred to him as the first evangelist. The key passages regarding Jesus are about the virgin birth (7:14), the coming of Immanuel (9:1-7), the sprouting of the root of Jesse (11), the suffering servant (53-55) and the mission of the Messiah (61).

JOAN SKINTA AT CARE CENTER

Woodhaven Care Center, c/o Joan Skinta Room 107, 2400 McGinley Rd., Monroeville Pa 15146

FUNERAL

The funeral service in the Church, although not considered as specifically sacramental, belongs among the special liturgical rites of the People of God.

We have already seen that the Church has a particular sacramental service for the consecration of human suffering, and special prayers for the departure of the soul from the body in death. When a person dies, the Church serves a special vigil over the lifeless body, called traditionally the parastasis or panikhida, both of which mean a “watch” or an “all-night vigil.”

The funeral vigil has the basic form of Matins. It begins with the normal Trisagion Prayers and the chanting of Psalm 91, followed by the special Great Litany for the dead. Alleluia replaces God is the Lord, as in Great Lent, and leads into the singing of the funeral troparion.

The troparion and the kontakion of the dead, as all hymns of the funeral vigil, meditate on the tragedy of death and the mercy of God, and petition eternal life for the person who is “fallen asleep.”

Thou only Creator Who with wisdom profound mercifully orderest all things, and givest unto all that which is useful, give rest, O Lord, to the soul of Thy servant who has fallen asleep, for he has placed his trust in Thee, our Maker and Fashioner and our God (Troparion).

With the saints give rest, O Christ, to the soul of Thy servant where sickness and sorrow are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting (Kontakion).

Psalm 119, the verbal icon of the righteous man who has total trust in God and total devotion and love for his Divine Law—the verbal icon of Jesus Christ—is chanted over the departed, with its praises and supplications for life in God. It is this same psalm which is chanted over the tomb of Christ on Great Friday.

It is the psalm which sings of the victory of righteousness and life over wickedness and death.

My soul cleaves to the dust, give me life according to Thy word (119.25).

Turn my eyes from looking at vanities; and give me life in Thy ways (119.37).

Behold, I long for Thy precepts; in Thy righteousness give me life (119.40).

Thy testimonies are righteousness forever; give me understanding that I may live (119.144).

Plead my cause, and redeem me; give me life according to Thy promise (119.154).

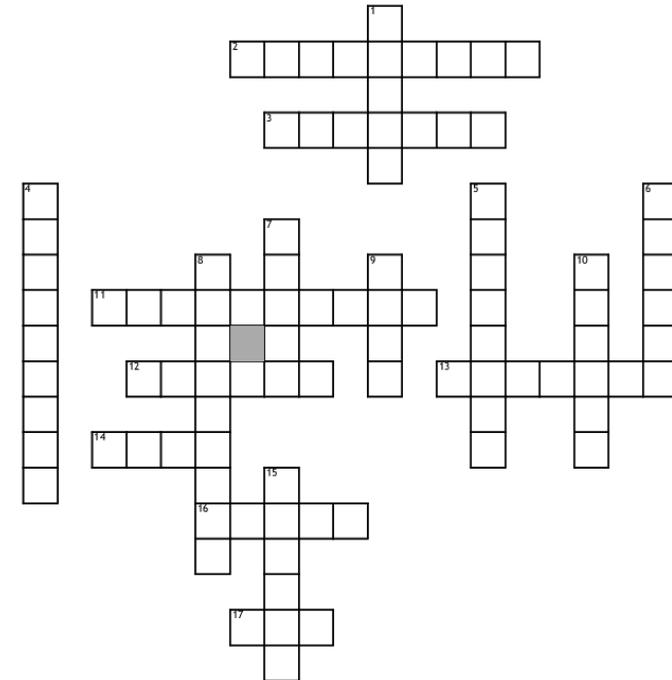
This entire psalm together with the verses and prayers that go with it, the canon hymns of the service, and the special funeral songs of Saint John of Damascus all are a meditation on life and death. They are, in the context of the new life of the Risen Christ who reigns in the Church, a lesson of serious instruction for those who are immune to the full tragedy of sin and its “wages” which are death.

Sometimes men criticize the funeral vigil for its supposed morbidity and gloom; they say that there should be more words of resurrection and life. Yet the vigil itself is not the Church’s “final word” about death. It is simply the solemn contemplation upon death’s tragic character, its horrid reality and its power as that of sin and alienation from God. The realization of these facts, which particularly in the modern age is so strikingly absent, is the absolute condition for the full appreciation and celebration of the victorious resurrection of Christ and his gracious gift of eternal life to mankind. Without such a preparatory meditation on death, it is doubtful whether the Christian Gospel of Life can be understandable at all.

To be continued...

SCHEDULES FOR EASTER TIME AT ST PETER AND PAUL BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH:

Palm Sunday	04/05/2020	11:00 am	Divine Liturgy with Blessing of Palms
Holy Tuesday	04/07/2020	06:30 pm	Presanctified Liturgy with Holy Anointing
*Holy Thursday	04/09/2020	07:00 pm	<u>Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great with Vespers</u> <u>at St Elias</u>
Good Friday	04/10/2020	05:00 pm	Burial service of Jesus with Solemn Vespers
Holy Saturday	04/11/2020	05:00 pm	Matins of Resurrection with Divine Liturgy; Blessing of Easter baskets
Easter Sunday	04/12/2020	11:00 am	Divine Liturgy/Blessing of Easter baskets
Bright Monday	04/13/2020	11:00 am	Divine Liturgy
Bright Tuesday	04/14/2020	11:00 am	Divine Liturgy
Thomas Sunday	04/19/2020	11:00 am	Divine Liturgy



Across

- The word catholic means _____.
- The greatest of the theological virtues.
- The restoration of our relationship with God.
- The raising of ones mind and heart to God.
- The first sacrament of initiation.
- The absence of good.
- Skipping mass on Sundays is a sin against the _____ commandment.
- The satisfaction from living right.

Down

- Where your _____ is, so shall your treasure be.
- A sacred sign given to the church to deliver grace is a _____.
- The other sacrament of service besides Holy Orders.
- The gift of the Holy Spirit by which you desire the things of God.
- God's gift of his life to us.
- "Counselor" or "Helper".
- Baptism left an indelible mark on your _____.
- Holy oil is known as sacred _____.
- The highest degree of Holy Orders a priest can attain.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST

Today Church brings us to the last week of Great Fast before we enter the Great and Holy Week. My question is what have you done this Great Fast? Most of us will answer this question with the following: I have fasted. I have gone to confession. I have attended church more often. I have received Holy Communion.

Now I ask you to remember the Gospel of the Publican and the Pharisee. “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are, ... I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess ... The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

In Great Fast we are performing our Christian Duty. There are many externals to this duty. They are nothing more than tools for us to reach our real Christian Duty which is repentance. Our Lord at the beginning of His public ministry reminds us that this is our goal when He said “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

What is the true meaning of repentance? Repentance is a translation of the Greek word metanoia. This Greek word’s meaning is the changing of one’s mind; the changing of the way a person thinks. The Holy Fathers remind us that all sin is born in thought. Thus, if we change our thought process we change the way we live our lives.

When we look at sin we often try to lessen its meaning in our lives. We divide it into degrees; major or minor. We often hear people say I haven’t killed anyone or robbed anyone; I am basically a good person; I’m only human; God will surely look the other way because of the good things that I do.

This understanding is very far from the truth. Sin is sin. Sin blocks us or binds us from having a true relationship, communion, with God. Sin keeps God from acting in our daily lives.

Repentance may also be described as a “spiritual experience”. When we come to repentance and look at our sins we will see many things. If we look at the roots of our sins we should see that they are rooted in our self-will. We will see that all of the sinful actions that we have taken are based in selfish, centered acts or fear.

The Church gives us an image of repentance on this the fifth Sunday of Great Fast in Saint Mary of Egypt. She sees that she is nothing without God. This brings her to repentance. She prostrates herself and begins to beat her breast as the publican saying God be merciful to me a sinner.

There are things that we can learn from Saint Mary. These are that there is nothing that is so terrible that we cannot repent from it. The longer we hold on to sins, especially those we keep as secrets, the sicker we become spiritually. God loves us and wants us to come to Him if we make the effort through repentance. In becoming spiritually well we see that the externals of prayer, fasting, confession and communion all have a deeper spiritual meaning. We will want to do these things because they bring us closer to God.

My prayer for each of you as we come to the end of Great Fast is that we will truly be able to come to repentance that brings us into communion with God. I ask the Lord that we are able to watch our thoughts because they become ours words and actions, that we are able to watch our words and actions because they become ours character, and that we watch our character because it is our destiny.



The Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Office of the Archbishop
66 Riverview Avenue Pittsburgh PA 15214
(412)231-4000 Phone (412)231-1697 Fax

March 17, 2020

CHRIST IS AMONG US! HE IS AND ALWAYS SHALL BE!

Byzantine Catholic Faithful traditionally greet one another with the above powerful proclamation of our firm belief that Christ is present with us always and everywhere, in particular in receiving His Most Holy Body and Blood in the Eucharist. We can be assured of this regardless of anything we face, whether it is something that brings us great joy or something that poses a threat to us, like the Coronavirus spreading throughout the world. My prayers are with those who are affected by this virus, especially those who have lost loved ones.

I join my voice, together with the other bishops and government authorities to urge calm in this time of crisis. Now is the time to show just how strong we are in faith and in deeds. We are facing unprecedented challenges, but together we will meet them and emerge stronger.

I urge all of our clergy and faithful to diligently take all measures in their personal and communal lives to protect themselves and others from the spread of this virus. I encourage everyone to follow the directives of your local authorities for your own safety as well as for the safety of those around you.

With regard to Liturgical Worship in our Churches, following the new national guidelines issued on March 16, 2020 to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people, effective immediately, all public Liturgical celebrations are being suspended until further notice. This includes the Sunday Divine Liturgy, Lenten Services and Holy Days. The faithful of the Archeparchy are dispensed from the obligation of attending Sunday and Holy Day Divine Liturgies, but you should continue to keep holy the Lord’s Day through prayer and support of those in need in your Church.

There are ample parishes that “live stream” and radio broadcast of Byzantine Divine Services. You are encouraged to tune in to one of them. The times are listed on the attached sheet. In addition, all Religious Education programs as well as parish socials and Lenten dinners/fish fries that are open to the public should be canceled. Carry-out is permitted.

Baptisms, weddings, and funerals may be celebrated with only the immediate family present. People who are at high risk are encouraged not to attend. Confessions should be heard if possible with a screen and good ventilation. The priests will celebrate Eucharistic services in private for their people where already scheduled. Because of the emergency, the priest is permitted to celebrate even if no one is in attendance. Priests are authorized to combine prayers for previously committed Liturgy stipends, or reschedule the date and time.

We commend all the faithful of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh to the Protection of the Theotokos as we continue to pray for a speedy end to this outbreak.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ William C. Skurla

Most Reverend William C. Skurla, D.D.
Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh

WITHOUT WEEKLY COLLECTIONS, PARISHES FACING FINANCIAL STRESS AMID THE PANDEMIC

Msgr. Charles Kosanke has told his parish staff that he can keep them employed full-time until April 6. After that, he has no idea.

“We certainly don’t want to hurt them, but sadly it may come to that in order to keep the lights on,” said Msgr. Kosanke, the pastor of Detroit’s two oldest parishes, the Basilica of St. Anne and Most Holy Trinity Church.

Msgr. Kosanke has the same dilemma that thousands of other pastors across the United States are now facing as public Masses across the country have been canceled because of the novel coronavirus pandemic. They rely on the weekend Mass collections to make ends meet. Without the Sunday collection basket, their parishes will soon not have enough money to pay the bills.

“A parish can probably take a hit in their offertory for two or three weeks,” Msgr. Kosanke told Our Sunday Visitor. “But beyond that, it becomes really unsustainable.”

Communication is key

The highly contagious virus, which can be especially deadly to older adults and those with weakened immune systems and underlying health problems, is challenging pastors and Church leaders everywhere to figure out how to best provide spiritual support and keep crucial ministries operating in a time when their major source of revenue has been crippled.

Want more coverage on coronavirus from a perspective of faith? Sign up for our daily newsletter.

The crisis is forcing priests throughout the United States to consult the financially savvy parishioners on their parish finance councils. From Detroit to Dallas, pastors are being called to exercise leadership and communicate their parishes’ fiscal needs to the flock in an open and transparent manner.

“Every pastor has to be communicating many times more than what they were before with their people,” said Matt Manion, the faculty director of the Center for Church Management at Villanova University’s School of Business.

“I think the people need to hear from their pastor, if not daily then pretty close to it,” said Manion, who also told Our Sunday Visitor that the first thing a pastor should do, if he hasn’t done so already, is to have an emergency phone call with his parish finance council.

“And if they’re not taking a look at what their cash flow looks like for the next three to six months, that’s the first exercise I would have them all do,” Manion said. “They should understand what their situation is and make adjustments, and start planning for those now.”

Mario Enzler, the director of Master of Science in Ecclesial Administration and Management at The Catholic University of America’s Busch School of Business, told Our Sunday Visitor that a “good, dynamic” finance council is crucial right now to advise pastors on whether they should be paying certain bills first before trying to make payroll.

“Many dioceses have emergency funds. This is the time that they might dip into it,” said Enzler, a former Swiss banker and tax fiduciary who served in the Vatican’s Swiss Guard during Pope St. John Paul II’s pontificate.

Enzler told Our Sunday Visitor that he believes parishes everywhere will experience immediate cash-flow problems, though he struck an optimistic tone when taking a long-term view, adding that he believes the clergy and laity will step up.

“I’ve been telling priests, you have to be extremely entrepreneurial right now, and many of the young priests are doing that,” Enzler said. “They are celebrating Mass and streaming them live. They’re streaming themselves in their private chapels, in front of the Blessed Sacrament. They’ve created new Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups.

“This is an opportunity for the laity to step up, and they will if the priests communicate that need to them,” Enzler added.

Finding solutions

But in the short term, pastors have tough decisions to make. In the last weekend before the Archdiocese of Atlanta canceled all public Masses until at least early April, Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Atlanta collected about \$4,000. The weekend offertory is usually around \$10,000.

“Where’s that missing \$6,000 coming from? The answer is, it’s not. For the next three weekends at least, there’s no Mass, which means no basket,” said Father Bryan Small, pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul.

Father Small told Our Sunday Visitor that he and his finance council have decided, for now, not to pay the parish’s regular assessments to the archdiocese. After taking salaries, utilities and supplies into account, Father Small estimated that his 750-family parish needs about \$25,000 a month to stay open.

“So I’m going to my top 25 givers and asking them, ‘Are you in a position to be able to offer an emergency alm of \$1,000 to get us through the month?’” said Father Small, who has also asked his parishioners to switch to online giving, with mixed results.

“We’ve had online giving for years, but much to my dismay, only a fraction use it,” Father Small said.

Most parishes that have online giving platforms still expect to take a major financial hit because the vast majority of parishioners who contribute — especially the older generations — still prefer to give cash or a check in envelopes.

“We’re pushing online giving, but the reality is you’re not gonna push those percentages up significantly, because that’s not the way our people operate,” said Father Joshua Whitfield, the pastor of St. Rita Church in Dallas.

Kyle Hamilton, the CEO of OSV, which offers online giving services for parishes, said OSV recently has been seeing an increased number of phone calls and applications from parishes interested in implementing a remote donation option for parishioners.

“In this time, the online giving platform becomes much more functional when churches are closed and you can’t do anything on site,” Hamilton said, adding that “the urgency factor is definitely there. There is a need to maintain the offertory at some level.”

‘A very difficult time’

Father Whitfield told Our Sunday Visitor that he has been implementing several cost-cutting measures in recent days, including shutting down the electricity, air conditioning and HVAC systems to all parts of the parish campus that are not being used. He has also cut contract services and is considering reducing the parish’s hours of operation.

“We’re doing all we can do to cut material spending before we look at employees, which is obviously the just thing to do,” said Father Whitfield, who added that any pastor nowadays has to prioritize institutional survival above all else.

“Any institution in the Church in the United States that is not cutting spending is not being responsible,” Father Whitfield said.

At the same time, parishioners themselves are experiencing financial difficulties, especially those who have been or expect to be laid off soon because of the coronavirus forcing their businesses to close. Even with online giving and creative appeals from their pastors, many of them will not have as much money to give to the Church.

“They still have to pay their mortgages, car payments and utilities. They need to keep the lights on at home and feed their families” Msgr. Kosanke said of his Detroit parishioners, many of whom work in restaurants and other affected service industries.

“It’s a very difficult time,” Msgr. Kosanke said. “But it’s a time for the Church not to retreat but to be out in front. It’s time for the Church to be a leader and a consoler, and that’s what we’re trying to do. We’re trying to exercise the role of the Church in the midst of all this tragedy.”