

Dear Friends of Saint Lawrence,

I MISS YOU!!!!

I know that certain state governments are opening up, and I thoroughly understand their reasoning behind their respective decisions, however, I err on the side of caution - indeed, we all want for things to return to the good old days of 2019, but at the same time, we cannot be reckless. We must proceed in a responsible manner - one that does not endanger the lives of both ourselves and our neighbors. This is an extremely frustrating time (and I share in your frustration) and I know and appreciate just how badly you all want to go back to work. I have not seen my own mother since March 9th, and I have not seen any of you since around that time ... she is my biological mother yes, but all of **you** - you're family too!!! My life feels very empty without the presence of your lives in mine - as Tom Cruise once said in the movie, "Jerry McGuire", "*YOU COMPLETE ME.*" Until we can all once again convene in church worship, I feel completely incomplete.

My heart breaks over the fact that we cannot be together - I really do love you, my dear friends of St. Lawrence Parish! While the governors of the tri-state area are reluctant to open our doors and our businesses to the entire population, I also understand that they are doing their very best to ensure that our health and safety remain intact.

In the Gospel for this upcoming Sunday, the Third Sunday of Easter, the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus find themselves encountering the actual Risen Jesus. At first, they do not recognize Him, but after His departure, they admit that while in His Divine Presence, they felt as though their hearts were burning within them. Do not our own hearts burn as well? We long for peace and comfort and joy. In particular, we long for a return to 'normalcy'. I am sure that our hearts are empty without the Presence of Jesus the Holy Eucharist.

We all know that the Governor of Georgia has essentially thrown caution to the wind and therefore mandated that his citizens resume life as they knew it prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. I admire his optimism, but in my humble opinion, I find his decision entirely imprudent and hasty. I'm no doctor, but I do not think that injecting ourselves with hand sanitizer and exposing ourselves to the UV rays of the sun will expedite an end to the Corona Virus. This **cannot** be one of those "1 step forward, 2 steps back" approach. Therefore, my dear friends of St. Lawrence, please, please be patient. I know that you have heard this 'advice' from a thousand other

sources, but as your spiritual leader at St. Lawrence Church, it also falls on me to reiterate Governor Murphy's guidelines of doing everything possible to mitigate the spread of this horrific pandemic.

Much like the two disciples referenced above, our hearts are burning for Christ Jesus **and** burning for this terrible disease to come to an abrupt end. Please be patient and keep yourselves anchored in the Resurrection of Our Blessed Savior as we await positive results in the days and weeks to come. The pragmatic approach to this crisis is really the only way to defeat it! Pray, pray and pray more! I know that your prayers will bring this situation to an end.

May God bless you and please, remain safe!

Your friend in Jesus,
Fr. Eric

p.s. - I MISS YOU!!! 