

## ***A Message from Father Aveni***

As the well known poem “Footprints in the Sand” says, at the most difficult time in our lives, God goes beyond simply walking with us, but he carries us. Because we believe the Church to be the Body of Christ and true presence of God in our midst, we can be assured that God is journeying with us and at times carrying us. The Catholic Community of Billerica along with the Archdiocese of Boston want to make every effort to continue to provide the pastoral care to the people of our parishes and beyond, though we, like many other organizations are prudently adapting our pastoral care to protect the health and well-being of the many people we care for. Therefore, we want to share how we will provide pastoral care during this time of health concern, under the guidelines set by the Archdiocese of Boston.

In his most recent communication Monday 3/16, Cardinal Seán says “For these most serious reasons I wish to reiterate that without exception all Masses and religious services that would normally be open to the public in all Archdiocesan parishes, missions, and campus ministries are suspended until further notice.” Therefore, there will be no public Masses celebrated on weekdays or weekends, including the *Stations of the Cross* on Fridays.

The Catholic Community of Billerica will provide Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament during the regularly scheduled Sunday Masses for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 3/21-22 (including 4 PM on Saturday 3/21). There will be resources available to guide your prayer during your visit to the church, including the texts of the Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Lent. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass for the Catholics of the Archdiocese of Boston remains in place until public celebration of the Mass can be safely resumed. The celebration of the Mass will continue to be televised on both **CatholicTV** (Channel 268 on Comcast/Xfinity, and Channel 296 for Verizon/FIOS) and **EWTN** (Channel 291 on Comcast/Xfinity, and Channel 285 for Verizon/FIOS).

Our churches will be open for private prayer according to our regular schedule during the week. We will continue to provide the sacrament of Penance at the regularly scheduled times. We ask that you always practice social distancing whenever you are in contact with other Parishioners and with your neighbors.

As we all wait to see the scope of the restrictions on our community and our Church, we will not be scheduling additional Mass intentions for dates before July 1, 2020.

Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals may proceed, but following Governor Baker's Emergency Order issued 3/15, attendance must be limited to no more than 25 people. In the interests of the health of the people we serve, these liturgies should be limited to only immediate family.

We will do all we can to continue to staff our offices and respond to your faith needs. In order to do that, we rely heavily on your regular financial support of our Parishes. In order to continue your giving,

- You may leave contributions during any of the Holy Hours.
- You may mail your envelopes for any of our parishes or other donations to 1 Grace Ave, Billerica, MA 01821.
- You may bring your contributions to any of our Parish Offices.
- You may make a one-time or recurring contribution through online giving at *billericacatholic.org*:
  - a. Open *billericacatholic.org* in your browser
  - b. Choose **Quick Links**
  - c. Choose your parish under "Online Giving"

Most importantly, we ask for your prayers as we continue to provide pastoral care in this difficult time in our community. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we adapt to the restrictions and changes required for safety.

-- Father Aveni