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St. Vincent de Paul Society at Our Lady of Lourdes asks you to support the work of our conference with your gift of prayer. Please consider keeping the needs of the poor in your daily prayer and join with us in praying the following: "Father, we ask that those whom we assist find your gift of confidence, courage and peace by our concern for their needs. Lord, hear our prayer.

From the Pastor's Desk. In the present pandemic:

Churches will remain closed to the public for private prayer and devotions; however, where it is the custom for the people to pray the Rosary or other devotional prayers before Mass, this practice may continue.

Are baptisms able to take place?

Yes. Baptisms will resume in the usual manner at 2 p.m. on Sundays. Only one child/family at a time while maintaining social distancing

Can a funeral for my loved one take place at the Church?

Yes. At this time, Funeral Masses (with the body or cremated remains present) may be celebrated in the Church with up to 55 people present.

If the church is used for a funeral, the following is to be observed:

The funeral home staff, with the pallbearers (wearing masks) will bring in the remains to the front of the church. They would leave the church and then the mourners would enter wearing facemasks.

When the liturgy ends, the mourners leave the church and the pallbearers and funeral staff return and take the remains to the hearse.

In the event of a cremation, with the family bringing the urn, there would be no need for the family to wait to enter the church.

Live streaming of the service is permitted.

During the **interment at the cemetery**, the funeral home staff, and pallbearers (wearing masks) would bring the remains to the graveside and leave the area. The priest or deacon would arrive with the mourners. Following the prayers, the mourners leave and then the cemetery staff complete their work.

For weddings, the priest together with the couple, two witnesses and up to 50 more people can gather at the Church (photographers, cantor, any musicians make up part of the up to 55). Live streaming of the service is permitted.

Sacrament of Penance may be arranged through appointment.

In all these circumstances (including Sunday Mass), the rules of social distancing must be observed, as well as hygiene protocols such as ensuring that the church is cleaned and disinfected after each liturgical celebration and made safe.

It is mandatory that all parishioners who want to attend a public indoor celebration of Mass wear a mask, with the following exceptions:

- children under the age of 2; children 2 to 4 whose caregiver cannot get them to wear a mask;
- those who have difficulty breathing;
- people who suffer from an illness or disability that makes it difficult to put on or take off a mask.

The bread and wine are not presented in procession as usual. The bread and wine are placed on the credence table beside the altar before Mass. The monetary collection is to be received at the grotto/ramp door of the church at the end of Mass where people can place their donation in a basket supervised by an usher from a safe distance.

While hand shaking is not permitted during the Greeting or Sign of Peace, when invited to exchange a sign of peace, it can be a simple bow of the head to our neighbour.

Communion to the Sick and Homebound: In the present pandemic, spiritual communion will be encouraged for the sick and homebound. Thus, communion to the Sick and Homebound will not take place for the time being.

An Act of Spiritual Communion: *"My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You have already come, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen."* (Saint Alphonsus Liguori. p. 593 in Sunday Missal 2019-2020, Living with Christ).

“Prayer in the Present Pandemic: We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God”. In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection. Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment. Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust. Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health. Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone. Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus. Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity. Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future. Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer. Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course. To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen

