



St. Paul Catholic Church

Diocese of Austin

Founded in

204 Mills Street, Smithville, Texas 78957

512-237-3299

September 16, 2022

Dear parishioners of St. Paul parish,

The pandemic of Covid-19 has had devastating effects on individuals, families, communities and the Church. They change our ways of life on the social and spiritual levels. It has been definitely a test of faith. For some people it is an occasion to grow closer to God and our brothers and sisters. For others it is an excuse to stay away from the Church, the community of worship. The bishops of the United States are concerned with the negative spiritual effects on Catholics. They call for a revival in the devotion to the Holy Eucharist as the source of healing. Attending mass and holy hour are the concrete acts of opening ourselves up for God's healing grace. We all need healing whether infected by Covid-19 or not. Infection can be physical or spiritual or both. We may allow the fear of the virus to paralyze us, isolating us from God and others. God's love is concrete in the sacraments. He wants to touch us physically and spiritually through them. He desires to bring us into communion with him in these sacred realities, especially the Eucharist and confession. Jesus continues his healing ministries through the Church, the sacraments. He is coming to us in person.

I have been impressed by parishioners who come to mass regularly even when they can barely walk or while they are battling cancer that renders them vulnerable to fatal infection of the virus. They are the examples of faith for all of us. I was touched by parents who bring their children to mass even when there was not yet vaccine for them. I am reminded of the early Christians who went to mass in secret under the Roman persecution. Many of them suffered martyrdom while being at mass. Even today in many countries, Catholic Christians risk being killed or imprisoned and tortured when they attend mass. Their faith in Jesus' presence in the Eucharist speaks loudly to the world and to us. We have it very easy in America but our faith is not strong. May Jesus' love inspire in us a fire of love for him in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and confession.

I would like to thank you if you have been coming to mass. It is a great joy to be there for one another in difficult time. If you have not, I invite you to come back to the Church, the family of God, for the celebration of the Eucharist, the heavenly banquet that God prepares for us, his children. We are united together as the mystical body of Christ in the celebration of mass. Your absence is a wound in his body. We are saved as a community, the Church, not as isolated individuals. Our mass schedule for the weekend is at 5 pm on Saturday, at 8 am and 10 am on Sunday in English and at 12:30 pm in Spanish. On the last Sunday of each month, we have mass at Kovar at 12 pm and the Spanish mass at 12:30 pm said by a priest from Austin. I cannot bilocate as some people would like me to do. Confession is at 4:15 pm every Saturday. Weekday masses are at 6:30 pm on Tuesday through Friday. I encourage everyone to come to weekday mass whenever possible. The Eucharist is the heavenly treasure that God entrusts to us. We need to enrich ourselves from it to the greatest extent. It is more precious and real than accumulating material wealth.



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I would like to give you some updates of what is going on in our parish. We have started the classes for religious education from first through twelfth grade. If you have children at these ages, they need to be registered for the classes. Please contact the office for registration. We have begun the classes for RCIA. They are for non-Catholic adults who are interested in joining the Catholic Church. If you know anyone in this situation, please invite them to the class on every Thursday at 7:15 pm at the parish hall. I also encourage every Catholic to come to these classes to grow in your knowledge about the Catholic faith. You can come occasionally whenever your schedule allows.

We are preparing for the Fall Festival at our parish on October 16. We will have food and drink, auction, big raffle prizes, games for kids, live music and dancing if you are up for it. We need more help with selling the raffle tickets.

I want to see more participation in the life of the parish. We need more children to be altar servers. We need more teachers in religious education, more lectors and ushers. The parish is the family of God. If we want to see it full of life then we need to step up and be involved. May the Holy Spirit fill your hearts with God's love so that you may live your Catholic faith joyfully and boldly in the world. I would like to see you in church if I haven't. With God, we look forward to welcoming you back. May God's blessing be with you and your loved ones.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Bernard Hung

Pastor

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