Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic:

All Masses, Devotions and Parish Activities are cancelled at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish until further notice.

The Parish Office is also closed. If you are in need of assistance please leave a message on the parish phone at 607-748-8287.

The Food Pantry is open for drive-up service during their regularly scheduled hours:

Tuesday: 12pm-2pm
Thursday: 4pm-7pm
Saturday: 9am-12pm

Please call ahead at (607)785-3214

Please check our website at olsvestal.org for the most updated information.

“Do you believe in the Son of Man?” Jesus wants to motivate each one of us to see the truth. After developing a relationship with Jesus, the blind man “sees” as someone very special. The Pharisees, due to the blindness caused by their ignorance, prejudice, and need for self-preservation, still remain blind. Presuppositions, prejudices, assumptions, and our needs can easily blind us to truth. We see what we want or need to see and not what is really there. In addition, our stubbornness continues to convince us that we are right and that our vision is perfect. Only God can complete the picture.

Look around at our world. So much of what is happening today is due to the reluctance of folks to allow themselves to be stretched and brought to see what is really there. Many react to what life presents to them more with the lenses of ignorance than lenses of clarity. The Gospel carries great transformative value. With it, God corrects our vision and replaces our limited sight with the fullness of his sight. God opens our eyes so that we can see that it is not about preserving what we have created but of living in the immensity and wonder of God’s kingdom.

Through a simple, loving relationship with God, we can break through the tethers of prejudice, eradicate fear, dispel the darkness of hatred and sin, discover freedom, live in peace, work for justice, be effective stewards of creation, assist the migrant and the immigrant, and safeguard our economic systems and policies so that they truly serve all of God’s children. What we see is often an artificial lie. Our truth is much bigger than what our limited sight believes it to be. Allow God to work in and through you. Do not be afraid. Be open and be humble enough to know that you need help. Many human beings are living with severe cataracts that produce sight that is at best blurred. Are you one of them?
This message has changed numerous times since first written as we learn new restrictions. Please know the bulletin is on our web site olsvestal.org as well as up to date messages, olsvestal.org.

Bishop Lucia has announced the closing of our parishes. Given the precautions and preventative measures that being open entails, our buildings are closed for the time being EVERYTHING is canceled. This includes Masses and devotions, until further notice.

As my own health puts me at high risk at this time, confessions will be available at St. Anthony’s Church 9-9:30 am, daily and at St. Vincent de Paul Blessed Sacrament Saturday’s at 3 pm.

Our offices are currently closed to the public, I will be monitoring calls so please leave a message.

If any funeral takes place, it can only be immediate family and unannounced.

As of March 13, Bishop Lucia has dispensed everyone from the obligation of Sunday Mass until further notice.

**Prayer:** Bishop Lucia has asked that we join in the following prayer throughout the diocese.

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**NOVENA PRAYER FOR AN END TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

O Mary, full of grace, Patroness of this nation and Mother of the Church, in this time of illness and world-wide need we seek your intercession for the human family before your Son’s throne of grace and mercy. We ask for strength in adversity, health in weakness, and comfort in sorrow. Help us, O Blessed Mother, to be filled with confidence and trust in the tender compassion of our God. Let us not be afraid, like our own Saint Marianne Cope, who entrusted her life and ministry among the outcasts of society into the care of our Divine Physician. Continue to watch over all who are sick as well as those who care for them and give wisdom to all who are seeking a cure. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

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**The Food Pantry** will remain open, with drive-up service during regular Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday hours. With the schools closed and the number of service workers who will not be working, the demand is expected to significantly increase. Thus, the greatest assistance you can offer is monetary donations so that the specific needs at the time can be met.

Now is a great time to be looking at online giving, for our parish and our pantry. We still have bills and payroll. Please, either mail envelopes in or e-mail Kathy O’Brien about online giving, (kathy@olsvestal.org)

**Please use common sense and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly.**

Father Donovan

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**FORMED PICK OF THE WEEK**

**Ready Reasons**

**Was Jesus’ Sacrifice Enough?**

The Catholic teaching on penance is often rejected because they think it implies Jesus’ death on the cross was not enough. Learn why that is not actually the case.

**SIGN UP FOR FREE AT FORMED.ORG/SIGNUP**

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**Mary’s Meal**

Broome County Executive Jason Garner declared a State of Emergency in response to the coronavirus outbreak, which includes the closing of all schools in the county beginning Monday, March 16 and continuing through April 14. Therefore, Mary’s Meal will be closed for the months of March and April. We hope to resume with our Tuesday, May 12th Turkey Meal. It is our priority to protect our most vulnerable population. Thank you for your understanding and compassion in this most important matter.

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**Many thanks to Nancy Hargrave and Terry Dempsey for creating the Resurrection Garden in the Gathering Space.**
Letter from the Bishop
March 16, 2020

"Dear Diocesan Family,

Peace be with you! I write to you at this time of national and worldwide emergency to encourage you in your own personal prayer, fasting, and charitable works as we enter more deeply into our Lenten journey in ways we never expected.

Today, I announce that due to the Coronavirus and its relentless spread and effect on the most vulnerable of our society, all public gatherings for Mass, prayer, Faith Formation, and certain parish activities (see list) are suspended effective immediately. It is my hope and prayer that I will be able to lift this suspension in time for Holy Week and Easter, but that will have to be a decision for a later date. Correspondingly, during this time period the faithful are dispensed from their Sunday obligation to participate in Holy Mass.

This decision is not an easy one. For 57 years of my own life, Sunday Mass and Daily Mass during Lent have been a staple for me. Never did I think or ever imagine I would have to ask people not to gather for the Holy Eucharist. Nonetheless, I recognize my own obligation to ensure the health of the faithful, including our clergy, both spiritually and physically. By implementing effective social distancing measures, the Diocese of Syracuse supports the common good of all citizens and prioritizes the dignity of every human life, especially those most susceptible to the virus at this time.

I know that some of the Catholic faithful will be saddened and even upset by the decision to cancel Masses. This decision is based on the recommendations from both local and national emergency management and public health agencies and the immediate need to halt the spread of the Coronavirus. My hope is that this restriction of the public celebration of the Mass will be for a very limited period.

For the time being, it is necessary to keep in mind the common good of public health and the importance of doing our part in preventing the spread of the coronavirus by avoiding large gatherings (which operative number according the Center for Disease Control is 50). My Daily Mass will be livestreamed on the Internet and we are looking to provide also the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic Adoration, and a Lenten Retreat by such means.

As Catholics, caring for our spiritual and sacramental lives is paramount. Therefore, priests (physical health and age permitting) are available for sacramental emergencies and pastoral appointments while maintain the necessary public health precautions.

At the pastor’s discretion, churches may remain open for personal prayer, but public devotions such as the Stations of the Cross or other prayer services should be suspended to avoid large gatherings. Instead, I encourage you to make these devotions in private; the Diocesan website will provide resources to facilitate such prayer. If a parish already has regularly scheduled or perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, it should take place in a larger space (for example, the main church instead of a chapel) where sufficient social distancing (the CDC recommends at least 6 feet) is possible. If a church is open, pastors are to ensure that there is a thorough cleaning of all surfaces and that social distancing is maintained.

A particular concern is weddings and funerals. These may proceed but attendance should be limited to immediate family. Likewise, baptisms already scheduled may proceed but attendance should likewise be limited and fresh water be used for each baptism. Of course, in the case of emergency, baptism should always be conferred. Please also maintain social distancing for these events as described in the above paragraph. The individual reception of the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) may continue to be offered, but we have asked priests to move to a larger room/space for greater distance between priest and penitent and the use of a screen to block airflow between priest and penitent.

In pastoral care of the sick, please assist the priests in their effort to follow all protocols recommended by health professionals. In the event that a priest is asked to anoint someone with the coronavirus, the Code of Canon Law permits the use of an instrument (CIC 1000 §2), for example, a cotton swab. In such case, the used instrument should not come in contact again with the oil stock and should be disposed of in a reverent manner. In case of necessity, a single anointing on the forehead or on any other part of the body with the entire sacramental form (“Through this holy anointing... May the Lord who frees you from sin...”) suffices (CIC 1000 §1; PCS, 23).

With the temporary suspension of Sunday Mass, the public celebration of the RCIA scrutinies are also suspended. The Office of Worship will provide further guidance and any adaptations for the Easter celebration of the Sacraments will be addressed in future correspondence.

With public masses being cancelled, there will likely be financial and operational impacts to your parish. Parishioners can help their parish out by mailing their offering or by online contributions. I have also decided to postpone the start of the Annual Hope Appeal until we have a better grasp of the economic impact that this national emergency will have on the families of our diocese.

At the Pastor’s discretion, parish offices may remain open with essential staff. If your parish offices are open, be assured that regular cleaning of the office space will occur and appropriate social distancing should be observed.

Many people’s lives are being disrupted by the Coronavirus and our attempts to stop its rapid spread. In this season of Lent, let us increase our prayers, fasting and charitable works, so that God’s great compassion and love may be a source of hope and consolation for all. Please check in on your neighbor, especially the elderly and those who may be isolated in any way.

Please check our diocesan website for updates and further guidance. Let us keep each other – and all those impacted – in prayer during this time. Know I will remember you at Mass and in my daily prayer. May God watch over and bless each member of our Diocesan Family!"

–Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse
**Pick-up Times and Locations for Week of 3-16-20 to 3-20-20**

**Broome County Districts**

- **Binghamton** – 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. M-F
  - Ben Franklin
  - Binghamton High School
  - Calvin Coolidge
  - Columbus School
  - East Middle School
  - Horace Mann
  - MacArthur Elementary
  - Theodore Roosevelt
  - Thomas Jefferson
  - West Middle School
  - Woodrow Wilson
  - 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. M-F
  - Carlisle Apartments
  - Saratoga Heights

- **Chenango Forks** – 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. M-F
  - Elementary School

- **Chenango Valley** – 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. M-F
  - High School

- **Deposit** – 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. M-F
  - Elementary School

- **Harpursville** – 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. M-F
  - Elementary School

**Tioga County Districts**

- **Newark Valley** – 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. M-F
  - Berkshire Community Center
  - NV Middle School
  - Richford Town Hall

- **Owego** – 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. M-F
  - Apaachin Elementary
  - Owego Elementary

- **Tioga** – 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
  - Monday & Thursday
  - High School

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**Lenten Question of the Week**

What is holy water and how do I explain the reason that it is placed at the entrances of churches to my non-Catholic friends?

**Answer:**

Holy water is a sacramental, a reminder of the life of the Church expressed and celebrated through the sacraments. God’s grace is mediated through word and gesture (the outward signs). This comes to us through Jesus (instituted by Christ) as he entrusts to the Church his saving mission (to give grace). In turn, the Church, through the sacraments, shares that grace and mission with us.

On Ash Wednesday, we receive ashes on our foreheads to remind us of our origins, humbly created from the dust. But by blessing ourselves with holy water, we are reminded of our destiny! We are baptized sons and daughters of God. This is also a call to conversion, to live more fully our baptismal call to live as disciples of Jesus. We see holy water whenever we renew our baptismal promises. This will occur during the Easter liturgy as well, reminding us that we are indeed on a journey of faith and renewed in Christ. Blessing ourselves with holy water reminds us that we are baptized into a community faith, and always in need of turning from sin and toward God. Holy water is a visible sign of our baptism!
All Mass Intentions will be rescheduled. More information coming soon.

Please Remember in Prayer
...all who have recently died and their families:
Timothy Peters, husband of Michaelene.

Sanctuary Lamps
...are burning in the Church in memory of Timothy Dwyer requested by his loving family.
...are burning in the Chapel for Pat Tedesco requested by Nancy Lockwood.

Envelopes (101) $3,262.50
Loose $628.00
On-Line Giving (49) $2,146.00
TOTAL $6,036.50

Your generosity, charity and sacrifice are deeply appreciated. Thank you very much!

Daily Readings
March 22 - 29, 2020
4th Sunday of Lent

Sun
First Reading 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Second Reading Ephesians 5:8-14
Gospel John 9:1-41

Mon
First Reading Isaiah 65:17-21
Gospel John 4:43-54

Tue
First Reading Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12
Gospel John 5:1-16

Wed
First Reading Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10
Second Reading Hebrews 10:4-10

Thurs
First Reading Exodus 32:7-14
Gospel John 5:31-47

Fri
First Reading Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22
Gospel John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Sat
First Reading Jeremiah 11:18-20
Gospel John 7:40-53

Sun
First Reading Ezekiel 37:12-14
Second Reading Romans 8:8-11
Gospel John 11:25a, 26

Prayer List
Pray for all those who are ill and those who care for them.

Military Prayer List
Pray for those who are in the military and their families.
Kevin D. Barnard, Brian Carrington, Zachary Cianciosi, Jeremy Cianciosi, Mark Cianciosi, Mike Frisbie, Christian Gates, Jonathan Green, Matthew Kristek, Steve Kristek, Casey Macdonell, Stephen P. Maklos, Thomas Mansfield III, Angela K. Smith, Patrick Temperato, Brian Walter, Alex Wells
Christmas Craft Sale
Calling All Vendors! Do you have a craft you would like to sell before the Christmas Rush? November 14, 2020 9 am - 3 pm, Our Lady of Sorrows Gym. $25 per table. Limited electric available. Limited number of tables. All proceeds will benefit the OLS Youth Ministry program. Call Jackie Adams for more information, (607) 748-8287.

Lenten Prayer
Heavenly Father,
As I enter another week of my Lenten journey, guide me to the path that leads to you. Fill my heart with gratitude, patience, strength, and peace as I strive to become the best-version-of-myself, honestly admitting my shortcomings and sins.

As I renew my resolve each day to become a better person, let me hear your voice in the deepest reaches of my heart. Give me rest in you.

Help me to accept others, showing them your great love instead of casting judgment.

Stay with me through the busy days this week and remind me that when I need comfort, solitude, wisdom, or guidance, I can always turn to you.

Help me develop discipline and generosity through fasting and almsgiving, and come closer to you through prayer this Lent.

In your name I pray, Amen.