



## ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL BASILICA

April 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica,

During this time of isolation, anxiety and continuing uncertainty I want you to know I, along with the Cathedral's pastoral team, have been praying for you. I hope you remain healthy and safe as we follow the social isolation guidelines while trying our best to remain in touch with our families, friends and different communities, including our parish. All of us have been praying for those affected by COVID-19, our healthcare workers, first responders, those who must be present to provide essential services as well as those who have lost income. We place those who have died in God's loving care and remember the families who mourn.

These days highlight the need for the support, strength and direction that comes from our gift of faith. We miss what perhaps we have taken for granted. We have a desire to join together to celebrate the Eucharist and other parish and community events but right now that is impossible. However, it does not mean we cannot find other avenues to sustain our faith. To regularly read from Scripture, especially the readings we would hear at Mass, and reflect quietly with them in hand letting God speak to us through them is one way. There are, of course, many other avenues to experience God's presence. Our regularly updated parish bulletin, website and Cathedral Connections newspaper, continue to contain suggestions and resources for our use. If you would like more information or wish to subscribe to our bulletin and other announcements sent from St. Peter's, please connect directly with our parish office through Vianca Kmet at [vkmet@dol.ca](mailto:vkmet@dol.ca) or 519-432-3475 ext. 221. You may also use the "subscribe" icon on our website.

As well, if you or someone you know has any need, spiritual or otherwise, that we can assist in addressing we are always available – even if it's just to chat. Please call 519-432-3475 and engage the appropriate extension. Although the parish office is closed, those on our pastoral team and administrative staff continue to work from home responding to inquiries and trying our best to remain connected. The Cathedral, offices and parish centre are receiving a thorough cleaning and the security of our building continues to be monitored. We continue to address our financial responsibilities. Thank you to those who have been able to continue their support.

Like everyone in the world we have been forced to make adjustments. Marriages and other sacraments have had to be postponed. Funerals are not permitted.

When we are able to become active again all these activities will be considered and rescheduled as we move forward. You will also be made aware of other guidelines that will allow us to gather.

Preserving the connections of parish life is important as we also see evidence of family and friends reaching out to each other.

Most of us have never experienced a time such as this in our history. We are being tested. Both the ongoing coverage of the pandemic and the tragedy in Nova Scotia leave little room to think of other things. However, we are learning much about ourselves, our faith and our world. At the same time, again like never before, we are filled with a spirit of gratitude.

When we return we will have an opportunity to reflect on what we have been through and together fashion parish life for the future in new and enriching ways. Together we can plan for the future. Any change will require discernment in the midst of our prayer asking God's Spirit to guide us every step of our journey. It will take all of us with our action, vision and talent.

Since I have been a pastor my morning reflection has always concluded with a prayer for the parishioners of the parish in which I am blessed to serve: "Show us your way, Lord and give us the faith, courage, hope, humility and love to follow it wherever it may lead us."

God's presence cannot be restricted. We have witnessed signs of his presence working. The examples are endless. As Pope Francis reminds us, "A time of uncertainty can be a time of creativity."

We have lived through difficult circumstances before. We will survive this period in our history. We will be changed but we will grow and we will be stronger together.

May God continue to bless you and those close to you, the people working to keep us safe, and open us to respond to all who are in need.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rev. James E. Mockler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" being more prominent.

(Rev.) James E. Mockler