



# St. Matthew Catholic Church

221 John Paul Avenue, Statesboro, GA 30458

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March 16, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

With a view to put the safety and well-being of our parishioners and larger Diocesan family first and foremost, Bishop Hartmayer has informed all the priests and parishes that the public celebration of weekly and Sunday Masses is to be suspended until April 1<sup>st</sup>. Other scheduled devotions (i.e., Stations of Cross, etc.) will be suspended. I convey this missive with frustration and a heavy heart. Nonetheless, the Lord's grace will be our strength during this extraordinary season. The Church will remain open for private devotion and prayer.

In this Lenten season, I encourage you to continue your individual observance of the Stations of the Cross. We plan to broadcast the Mass via livestream on Facebook on Sunday at 10:30 am. If you are unable to "tune-in" during Mass, the livestream video will be accessible after Mass concludes. **As your Pastor, I encourage you to continue to keep the Sabbath holy! Please utilize the resources provided by the parish (i.e., the Lenten booklets with daily meditations, Matthew Kelly's Rediscover the Saints, the Rosary, and Stations of the Cross).** Where there is privation and suffering, His Grace abounds all the more. Once again, I highly recommend accessing our faith formation content online. It is available at no cost to you. Here is the relevant information:

1. Visit: [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org)
2. Select "Sign Up"
3. Select: "I Belong to a Parish or Organization"
4. Type in "St. Matthew, Statesboro, GA"
- 5) Explore and Enjoy!

I am remembering you and your intentions in my daily prayers. I have special concern for the most vulnerable members of our communities. Once again, I ask that you join me in praying for those who are ill. Likewise, we pray for their caregivers, healthcare professionals, and all those who are missing work and paychecks in these uncertain times. Please prioritize taking care of yourself and your family, health-wise, spiritually, and financially.

**As a staff, we will be following this daily prayer schedule and I invite you to pray with us from home.**

**9 am: Fr. Johnson's private Mass for parish intentions and Holy Hour (please send us your prayer intentions).**

**3 pm: Chaplet of Divine Mercy**

**5 pm: Novena to St. Therese for the well-being and protection of our parish family.**

We are trying to save money by keeping hallway lights off, HVAC units off, re-using the Paschal Candle, cutting back on Easter flowers, etc. We trust that God will provide for our needs as long as we follow His will. If you would like to change your tithe to online giving, you can do so at [www.osvonlinegiving.com/564](http://www.osvonlinegiving.com/564). Offertory envelopes can be mailed to the parish, but again, God will give us wisdom and "manna" (enough). PLEASE be sure your family and loved ones are taken care of first!

Also, let us know if you are aware of persons who need our help with food, medicine pick-up, or other assistance. We are here to serve. If you are in need of the Anointing of the Sick, please call me at the following number: (478) 955-5854. Although the office will be open during normal business hours, we will be operating in a streamlined manner to conserve resources. I will be available for counsel and Confession in my office during the week—or anytime by appointment. We are truly in the desert! **Though we are not able to gather as one community in our church, we are nonetheless bound to each other as brothers and sisters with bonds that are stronger than blood! You are my family! Please know that I will be offering my private Masses for you and your intentions.** There will be more information provided in the coming days.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Fr. John R. Johnson  
Pastor