



*"Prayer and quiet service:  
these are our victorious weapons."*

*Pope Francis*

*"Faith begins when we realise we are in need of salvation.  
We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we flounder:  
we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars.  
Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives.  
Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them."  
~Pope Francis (March 27, 2020)*

**My dear St. Joseph Parish Family,**

Today, the Church celebrates the Fifth Sunday of Lent, or Passiontide. This week marks the remaining two weeks until Easter Sunday and will lead us into Holy Week next Sunday with the celebration of Palm Sunday. Following our long-standing parish tradition, the statues and crucifixes within the church have been covered with violet veils and will remain "hidden" until the Easter Vigil. This ancient practice is one that comes from the Gospel of St. John's account of Jesus hiding Himself after having proclaimed His divinity (John 8:59).

This practice of veiling statues and crucifixes is meant to alert us that there is something different and unusual happening the very moment we enter the church. As we approach Holy Week, everything in our liturgical life is different. But, given all that is happening around us with the global pandemic and health crisis, including the public suspension of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, this practice of veiling statues and crucifixes may seem a bit redundant. **This Lent is different.** Everything right now is different. But, in this practice, perhaps we can find spiritual insight into how we can

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best approach these differences.

The veiling of statues and crucifixes continues the sense of fasting that we have experienced throughout the Lenten season. Through it, we undergo even a visual fast. At this moment in the liturgical year, only Jesus Christ Himself is before our eyes. In the coming readings from the various liturgies of Holy Week, our focus is to remain on our Lord's Passion so that we might understand the true value of Easter Sunday. And, even right now, as we must fast from gathering together and receiving our Lord Himself in the Holy Eucharist, our focus **must** remain on our Lord.

As Pope Francis reminded us this past Friday at the *Urbi et Orbi*, God is "calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others." During these difficult times, may our focus remain on Jesus Christ. When we are afraid, anxious, or fearful, may we turn to our Savior. "Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time."

We often refer to our homes as the "domestic church." In your domestic church, reflect on the Sunday readings and take time for personal and family prayer through recitation together of the Rosary, the Divine Chaplet of Mercy, or the Stations of the Cross. In the absence of our ability to gather in the church, perhaps this pandemic will serve to strengthen all the domestic churches of our parish.

Join us for the many live-streamed events offered by the parish each day via the Parish Website at [www.stjosephchurchbluffton.org](http://www.stjosephchurchbluffton.org) or on Facebook (Sunday Mass at 11 AM; Daily Mass at Mon.-Fri. at 11:30 AM, Sat. at 9 AM; Daily Rosary at 4 PM; Daily Evening Prayer at 6 PM). If you or anyone you know are in need at this time, we are here for you. Please call the Parish Office (824-1380) for assistance.

May we ask the intercession of our patron, St. Joseph, as we open ourselves to the incredible mercy of God given to us and trust in its presence in our lives.

*Faithfully in Christ, Fr. David*

*This coming Friday, April 3rd, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades has expressed hope that as many Catholics as possible will join him in meditating on the Stations of the Cross together, as a diocese, on the threshold of Holy Week. This great prayer will be offered for all those suffering during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will live-stream this event on the Parish Website and on Facebook Live.*

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS**  
**Live-stream with Bishop Rhoades**  
**Friday, April 3rd**  
**7 PM**

*Viewable on our Parish Website or Facebook Live*

