

March 13, 2020

Dear St. Ignatius Families,

If your household is anything like mine you have kids and adults worried and anxious about COVID19 as all of us increasingly feel the impacts on health, family, education, work, recreation, finances, and every aspect of our lives. This is simply different than anything we have known and the unknown can be very frightening. I certainly don't have the answers and I am trying to take things one day at a time (while planning for possibilities), but here are some things that I believe in general are helpful in any stressful event:

Acknowledge feelings of anxiety, fear, stress and anger (in ourselves and our children)

- Lower stress (here are some ideas):
 - Choose something small to do every day for your peace of mind (prayer, meditation, journaling, reading your Bible, listening to something that gives you hope or peace, etc.) Even if it's only 2 minutes it will go a long way to bring you the peace we all need and it's important that we stay attuned to God's spirit, not just the news.
 - Communicate with or find groups that are support-focused and not fear-focused (St. Ignatius neighborhood groups, Mom's group, etc.)
 - Get outside for a walk or bike ride – wave to neighbors
 - Meet in small groups for play and companionship, especially outdoors.
 - Make a daily schedule and have kids help with routine tasks such as meal preparation, homework, chores, recreation, etc. Instead of watching the news, take advantage of extra time at home to do things we often don't have time for – teaching kids to cook, reading a long book together, making or listening to music, playing games, teaching a skill, writing a letter or calling someone...
 - Use media well – choose one or two media channels for quality information about COVID19 but avoid watching or listening constantly unless it's necessary for your job. I find with children it is more helpful to find out what their questions and fears are first, before bombarding them with information. Simply addressing their questions with the best honest information (with age appropriate-ness) and empathizing with their feelings without overwhelming them with facts, statistics, and projections is helpful. I also believe written information is less alarming than video and audio (TV, internet) for children.
- Focus on what we can control – how can we be the Body of Christ at this time? (help kids come up with tangible ways to help...)
 - Delivering a meal or groceries to an elderly neighbor
 - Helping a younger sibling or a neighbor kid with online learning or homework
 - Organizing some neighborhood childcare or a place for kids to learn together to alleviate the stress of those who cannot work from home
 - Phone calls, cards, online chats with grandparents or other friends and family can be emotionally supportive
 - Pray together as a family, especially for those most vulnerable
 - We cannot choose our circumstances but we can choose how to respond. We can be helpers in times of need. Help children focus on how they will handle adversity. As parents our goal is to model and practice with them how to bring love, hope, and faith to the people and life experiences we encounter. Read stories and remind kids that many people have used difficult times to make a profound difference or to witness to greater meaning and purpose (medical professionals, activists, researchers, saints, etc.)

These are uncertain times and it is important that we can call upon one another in our faith community. There is no replacement for companionship in times of trouble. I pray that we can accompany one another with spiritual and emotional support, while also reaching out in tangible ways to help one another, especially the most vulnerable.

If I can support you with family faith resources or ideas for family life in the midst of this, please let me know. I am hoping to set up a forum on our Realm site so that we can share ways to best live out our Christian call as families during this time. Your inspiration is welcome.

If your family would like to join our St. Ignatius neighborhood program, please complete the attached form and scan and send it back to pfrangipani@sipdx.org or drop it in the parish mailbox. You can also reach out to Richard Silva at richard-silva@comcast.net if you want to help with connecting our elderly home-bound with groceries or other items.

Note: The Archbishop is asking that older parishioners do not attend mass and I anticipate Fr. Craig will have a statement for our community before the weekend. You can read the Archbishop's statement here: <https://archdpx.org/>

Finally, I offer your family the two prayers that keep coming to my mind these days:

St. Theresa of Avila:

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes through which He looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good. Yours are the hand through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

Serenity Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Blessings of health, peace, courage, and to you during these times.

Warmly,

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Hours: Mon-Thur, 9am-noon

Sun, 8am – noon