

Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted  
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October 15, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

**These are most difficult times.** Since the initial outbreak of the Coronavirus Pandemic, **Our Lady's Parish has actively responded to the challenges of the day in creative and concrete ways** in an attempt to meet the spiritual needs of our parishioners as well as those from elsewhere who choose to worship with us. (You may view a *video* called "Our Lady's Pre-Pandemic to Summer of 2020" found on the Parish website [www.olca.org](http://www.olca.org))

These days we clearly recognize the importance of our Faith and our need to lean on God for strength and support. We are not alone. God is with us providing the necessary coping skills to endure. **The Gospel Message of Jesus Christ, The Divine Physician**, has been our focus in offering **God's message of hope, courage, and the need for perseverance.** Although at this time we must maintain ourselves physically apart we symbolically stand together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Our Lady's Church** has served as an *oasis of peace* since the start of the Pandemic. It has **remained open for personal prayer** since the early stressful days of March, through the spring and summer months of 2020, to the present day. **Although costly, all the necessary and thorough cleaning and social distancing precautions** that were prudently required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Archdiocese of Boston have been reasonably followed. While many coffee shops and store chains remained open through the early days of the crisis it was even more important for our church to be open as well. Strategically located on the crossroads along Trapelo Road, off Route 95, Our Lady's stayed open for **Eucharistic Adoration** thus providing the faithful a place to safely pray and absorb the healing presence of Jesus Christ in the Real Presence. On-line Masses, talks, and devotions were and are being offered regularly to assist us on our earthly journey.

**Throughout the Pandemic (March - May 2020), as larger gatherings were no longer permitted, the following took place at Our Lady's Parish:**

- **Daily** (unscheduled, private) **Masses** celebrated **for the Parish** and the **world.**
- **Virtual Online Sunday and Holy Day Masses** celebrated - including Holy Week and Easter.
- **Eucharistic Adoration, Rosary and other Devotions** offered frequently online.
- **Church open** from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. for personal prayer and **Eucharistic Adoration.**
- Students at **Our Lady's Academy** received a **substantive on-line academic program throughout the spring of 2020** thanks to the dedicated efforts of Principal Mrs. Chandra Minor and the school's diligent staff.
- Families of the **Religious Education Program** provided with a wealth of **on-line teaching** materials throughout the spring of 2020 by Felicia Forger, Coordinator of the Program.
- **Weekly Virtual conferences** offered to the **students and families of Our Lady's Academy** and the **Religious Education Program.**
- **Weekly Virtual talks to the Parishioners.**

**(OVER)**

- **Outdoor Confession** held each **Saturday** afternoon through three seasons of weather.
- **Baptisms** organized and individually celebrated with small numbers in attendance.
- **Outdoor Eucharistic Precessions** at (Meadow Green and Waltham Crossings) our **two Nursing Home/Rehabilitation Facilities** letting the residents and staff know they were not alone. The Eucharistic Christ through the Church was present with them at each visit.
- **Sacrament of the Sick/Anointing** offered to all Catholic residents of Meadow Green and Waltham Crossings one month prior to the State imposed health shut down.
- **Blessing of Caskets of the Deceased** with families outside Church in prayer services prior to burial. **This practice brought much solace to those grieving the loss of a loved one.**

**Since the Official Re-opening for Public On-site Worship – May 2020 to present:**

- **Celebration of Outdoor Sunday Masses** allowing **450-600 people** to gather safely for worship. *(Made possible by strongly committed and trained volunteers and staff, coordinated by Sharon Micco, Office Manager)*
- Extensive **Outdoor Sound System** essential for outdoor services purchased and installed.
- **Other outdoor Masses** to celebrate **Holy Days, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, and Our Lady's Academy 2020 Graduation.**
- Celebration of more **Baptisms, Weddings, and Funeral Masses** held inside the Church.
- **Celebration by Cardinal Seán O'Malley** of our September 13, 2020 Outdoor Mass.
- Our Parish-based **St. Vincent de Paul Society continued their work to assist people in need.**

These are **times** that **require flexibility and creativity** in ways to respond to the needs of the day. In the months ahead, Our Lady's Parish will continue to respond to any sudden twists and turns presented by this crisis. Father Francis Pham and I join you and people throughout the world as we all pray for an end to this Pandemic. I am grateful to Father Francis for his priestly ministry at the parish, as well as our seminarians who have contributed much to the spiritual care of the people.

**Fall 2020 and Forward:**

- **Our Lady's Academy re-opened for on-site education** for its **340 students in September.** Throughout the summer extensive planning went into the safe re-opening of school and daily review of procedures continues. Families and their children are very pleased to return to classes in school and are cooperating fully following the necessary health mandated requirements. *(Additional live-stream classes are also offered to those children whose parents prefer they study from home for now).* Thorough deep cleaning follows each class day.
- The **Religious Education Program** has also **resumed on-site classes** following strong health protocol measures. The classes are held in limited sections of the building such as the Parish Hall, cafeteria and some other designated areas. Deep cleaning of the areas used follow each Sunday session.

**Significant Building Work for the Maintenance of Our Property Through the Summer of 2020.**

*(Funds for these projects were specifically raised and given through either the Church and School Building Funds, or the Restricted Rectory Title Fund from the Bequest of Patricia Dorin)*

- **School Roof Replacement – Early Childhood School Annex** (2000 Addition)
- **Church Roof Replacement – two rear flat roofs** over Sacristy and Church's Belmont side.

- **Rectory connected to Sewer and updated water line.** *(Prior to the connection had an aged septic system)*
- **Completion of pavement at Rectory parking area** – The final layers and installation of Bow Street Fence are anticipated by spring of 2021.
- **Church Divine Mercy Shrine and Side Shrines of Mary and St. Joseph** – the beautification work has resumed and will continue through spring of 2021.

I am grateful to **God** for all the **blessings** He has bestowed upon our Parish especially during these difficult times. **Many have stepped forward, volunteering time and offering contributions**, to assist in making these efforts possible. Both our **Church and School staff serve our Parish with great dedication**. Our Lady's qualified to receive an *8-week Federal Stimulus PPP Employment Loan (hopefully grant)* to support payment of school faculty and other staff during the spring of 2020. Tom McGovern, Business Manager was instrumental in procuring that for us. Through careful management of our budget we were able to weather many more weeks through our own solvency thus avoiding the need to lay-off any parish employee. Our Lady's Academy remains a vibrant school supported by tuition and separate school fundraising events. School fundraisers remain particularly challenging during these restricted times especially with the temporary suspension of Bingo.

Our **Grand Annual** begins the weekend of October 24/25 through February 2021. This fund is necessary to balance our church budget. For this reason, I ask you to be as generous as your means can afford. **Each working parishioner is asked to contribute \$500.** If this amount is beyond your means, **any donation is welcome and essential** for the financial solvency of the Parish. **If your means enable you to contribute more – please prayerfully consider doing so.** Enclosed is our parish income statement for the past fiscal years.

Also enclosed please find a Grand Annual envelope. **Donations** can be **mailed** directly to: **Our Lady's Parish, 920-R Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA 02452**, or simply place your contribution in an envelope or check marked "Grand Annual" in any outdoor or inside **church contribution container**. If it is more convenient, please use our **Online Giving for credit card payments**, simply fill out the enclosed form and return or you can fill out the **online donation form at [www.olca.org](http://www.olca.org)**. Contact Sharon Micco in the Parish Office if you would like to pay by phone or for any questions at **(781) 894-3481 (X 2)** or email [parish@olca.org](mailto:parish@olca.org).

May Almighty God continue to bless each one of us during these particularly challenging times. Know of my prayers for you and your families. Please remember me in yours as together we invoke the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother, to advocate for us before the Throne of the One God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Sincerely in Christ,

Father James M. DiPerri  
Pastor

