



You are the Church...Remain OPEN

Covid-19 pandemic; an unknown virus till it struck the planet earth has turn the world up side down and brought the world to standstill. The virus has spread to almost all corners of the universe causing hundreds of deaths and thousands infected. The life and activity of humanity is closed down, it has also closed down the Church buildings but one thing is for sure it has no power to close down the CHURCH; real Church that you are. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 says “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy that person, for the temple of God is holy, and you are that temple.” Or, in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 we read; “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body.”

So, dear Church you are to remain OPEN. Are you reminded of the call of St. Francis of Assisi in 12th century to repair the *house of God*? This is the time to be what is our calling to be the true church/house of God wherever one is, in everyway possible and return to our loving Father. On Ash Wednesday we have the call to *return to the Lord*; “Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing (Joel 2:12-13).”

Thousands of people who may have been exposed to Corona virus are asked to ‘Self-Quarantine’ for 14 days. The word Quarantine comes from mid 17th century: from Italian quarantina ‘forty days’, from quaranta ‘forty.’ May be at this time, during the season of Lent-the season of grace, we are reminded to Self-Quarantine spiritually in order to establish a right relationship with the Heavenly Father. Remain open in your domestic Church-your family, to your family members, remain open to God, to love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness. Parents be vibrant witness of

faith to your children at this time; children be strengthened in your faith through prayer life and spiritual exercises.

Covid-19 has cancelled many things but not **Everything** is cancelled; Sun is not cancelled, rain is not cancelled, spring is not cancelled, reading, dance, music, imaginations are not cancelled, prayer and devotions are not cancelled, relationships and conversations are not cancelled, ALTAR (Adoration, Love, Thanksgiving, Asking, Resolution) is not cancelled, kindness, mercy, compassion and forgiveness are not cancelled, **LOVE** is not cancelled and above all **HOPE** is not cancelled. The public liturgical services held at the church buildings are cancelled and closed. Social distancing now called physical distancing and no public liturgical services at the church buildings could be hard on each one of us but You as the Church of God can remain open to be true church wherever you are, you can be the church that God expects you to be...nobody can close the church that you are. Its sad that we have to go through these ordeals. In this trouble time, dear people of God, remain open to God and to others in being good human. Strengthen your domestic church, spend time in spiritual communion, prayer and other spiritual exercise. Spread the virus of Love around you, give hope to each other and hold each other in prayer. ***Please, do not cancel the GOODNEWS of Jesus from you.***

As it is said “Church building is closed but as long as priests live; the altar will not rust. The priest will offer the Eucharistic sacrifice and will left up all the faithful to God.” We the friars in Richmond as a community are open to lift you all up in our prayers and Eucharist that we will solely celebrate as a community. Be assured of my prayers when I offer the Eucharistic sacrifice.

“Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.” (Hosea 6: 1-3)

