



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Tony DeGol

Director of Communications

2713 W Chestnut Avenue

Altoona, PA 16601

Phone: 814-695-5579

Cell: 814-937-1418

www.dioceseaj.org

proclaim.dioceseaj.org

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Two Priests in Quarantine; Masses Cancelled at Altoona Parish

(ALTOONA, PA) – Out of an abundance of caution, two priests at an Altoona parish have begun a 14 day quarantine after exposure to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. The exposure occurred outside of the parish.

Father Brian Saylor, Pastor of Saint Rose of Lima Parish, and Father Carl Spishak, Senior Priest in Residence at Saint Rose of Lima, began their quarantine today. It will continue through October 25. During that time, no public Masses will be celebrated at the parish, including the weekends of October 17-18 and October 24-25. Today's 10:30 a.m. Mass at the parish was cancelled after learning of the priests' exposure. A professional company is deep cleaning the parish complex.

Parishioners are invited to attend Mass at other parishes during this time. The faithful are also reminded of the Mass broadcast from Saint John Gualbert Cathedral in Johnstown every Sunday live at 11:00 a.m. on WATM ABC 23 and rebroadcast every Sunday at 9:00 p.m. on Atlantic Broadband channel 9. There are various opportunities to view Mass online or on social media.

“My thoughts and prayers are with Father Saylor, Father Spishak, Saint Rose of Lima parishioners, and everyone affected by this pandemic,” said Bishop Mark Bartchak. “The Church has a moral obligation to keep people safe, and I appreciate the continued guidance from the local medical community and other health professionals as we strive to make decisions in the best interest of everyone’s wellbeing.”

Bishop Bartchak continues to direct all clergy and parishioners to wear masks at all Masses and other liturgical celebrations and to practice physical distancing. The obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains waived until further notice. Those who are vulnerable to the coronavirus and those who do not feel well should avoid attending Mass and other Church functions.