



# Opening Up

## AFTER THE PANDEMIC

PRESENTED BY:

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# Prayer in Time of Pandemic

Almighty and eternal God,  
our refuge in every danger, to whom we turn in our distress;  
in faith we pray, look with compassion on the afflicted,  
grant eternal rest to the dead, comfort to mourners,  
healing to the sick, peace to the dying,  
strength to healthcare workers, wisdom to our leaders  
and the courage to reach out to all in love,  
so that together we may give glory to your holy name.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.



# What have we experienced?

- ▶ Major emphasis on electronic participation
  - ▶ Mass
  - ▶ Prayer events
  - ▶ Small Group virtual gatherings
  - ▶ Adult faith events
- ▶ Return to “basic” experiences of faith
  - ▶ Family
  - ▶ Personal Prayer
  - ▶ Friendships





# What might we expect?

- ▶ Slow exploring of the space and safety by parishioners
- ▶ When will dioceses reinstitute the Sunday obligation? State laws?
- ▶ Lots of caution about interchange and receiving Communion
- ▶ Gradual building through the summer into the fall
- ▶ Special concern for elderly and immunocompromised parishioners
- ▶ “Something like normal” sometime in the fall?
- ▶ Some curiosity by somewhat distant members as things begin again
- ▶ Lots of energy around school and religious education



# Phased Activity

Even if churches “open up” in Phase 2, participation will still be limited to certain numbers of people.

It will be a while before churches simply “open up.”





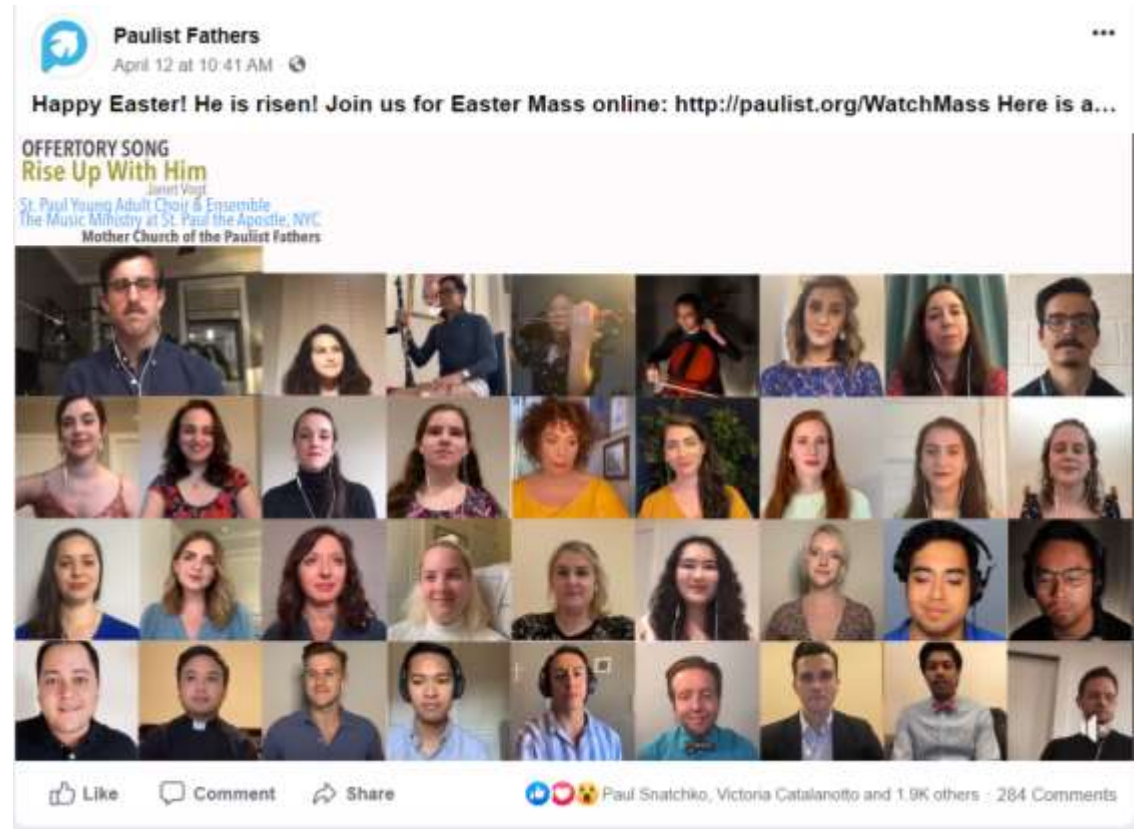
## A Community-Wide Service of Remembrance

- ▶ Develop a service that many people in your community can attend.
- ▶ Invite other religious leaders and neighbors to join in.
- ▶ Concentrate on those who have died who now are in God's hands.
- ▶ Also emphasize thanksgiving for life; take special note of those who survived.
- ▶ Have readings from a variety of traditions.
- ▶ Incorporate a simple ritual that everyone can feel part of.
- ▶ Have simple hospitality afterwards.



# Going Forward-1

- ▶ Maintain our electronic initiatives
  - ▶ We see that they are ways to keep up connections
  - ▶ Seniors and homebound
  - ▶ Peripheral members can “participate” in some way



# Going Forward

- ▶ Foster more “peer” and “personal” initiatives
  - ▶ Be deliberate about family prayer and activities
  - ▶ Provide resources for individual prayer experiences
  - ▶ Encourage “processes” of discipleship which “wrap around” Eucharist







# Processes of Discipleship

- ▶ More consistent exploring of the **Word** of God
  - ▶ Scriptural reflection, prayer, lectio divina
  - ▶ Experiences of encountering God in Jesus
  - ▶ Renewed experiences of commitment and conversion
- ▶ More consistent involvement in **prayer and worship**
  - ▶ Development of consistent patterns of daily prayer
  - ▶ Renewed appreciation of the Mass and what it brings
- ▶ Importance of **community** for supporting faith
- ▶ Increased focus on **serving** others generously





## Opening up: Start to Return

- ▶ **Be prepared for welcome and establishing contacts**
  - ▶ Welcoming letters sent out
  - ▶ Greeters
- ▶ **Emphasis on community “exchange” around worship**
- ▶ **Special Programming**
  - ▶ Invitation for ministries
  - ▶ “Reconnecting” ministries



# Opening Up: People Returning

- ▶ **Create a major parish event around Eucharist for the parish**
  - ▶ “This is our celebration of returning to worship”
- ▶ **Get as many people to a few celebrations by combining**
  - ▶ So people can “see” each other again
  - ▶ Feel the power of their gathering
  - ▶ See ministries of song, reading, extraordinary ministers
- ▶ **Emphasize multiple levels of invitation**
- ▶ **Especially reach out to less than active parishioners**

# Opening Up: People Returning

► Consider having a  
**Parish Mission**  
concentrating on:

- Liturgy
- Community
- Mission





## Opening Up: People Returning

- ▶ Create a major social event for the parish and neighborhood
  - ▶ Make it festive
- ▶ If parish can do “pot luck” offer that to everyone
- ▶ Otherwise have something parish can make available
  - ▶ Cookout
  - ▶ Games for children
  - ▶ Outdoor booths and tables
- ▶ Use event to “put parish on map” for neighborhood again
- ▶ Distribute “brochure” about the parish





# Opening Up: Special Initiatives

## ▶ **Adult Faith Formation**

- ▶ Catechesis on the Mass
- ▶ Small Group processes

## ▶ **Religious Ed**

- ▶ Special outreach to parents
  - ▶ Events for parents to meet and share
- ▶ Renewed recruitment for children

## ▶ **Renewing Faith**

- ▶ Ways for Catholics to gather, ask questions
- ▶ New ways for Catholics to reconnect

Focused Invitation

Special Welcome

Presence of Staff and ministers



# Changes in Parish Life

- ▶ **Opportunity to “jump start” the RCIA**
  - ▶ Use the “pause” to help team re-gather and re-evaluate
  - ▶ Special invitation to join “Inquiry”
- ▶ **Opportunity to refocus liturgical celebration**
  - ▶ What can ministers be doing better?
  - ▶ What changes can we think about in parish celebrations?



# Changes in Parish Life

- ▶ **Opportunity to “re-tool” religious education**
  - ▶ Renewed emphasis on home-based and neighborhood-based activities
  - ▶ Renewed opportunity to involve parents in new way: “Home schooling”, Weaving religious formation into home life
  - ▶ Renewed opportunity to form teachers
    - ▶ In models of discipleship
    - ▶ Away from the “class room” and “sacramental prep” temptations
- ▶ **Renewed opportunity to focus parish school**
  - ▶ Family evangelization
  - ▶ Parents-teachers as disciples



# Changes in Parish Life

## ▶ **Continue electronic connections**

- ▶ What parish can live stream
- ▶ Renewed initiatives via Facebook, Instagram, etc.
- ▶ Email blasts

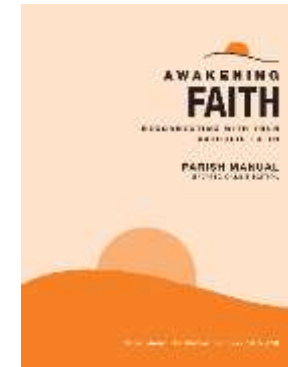
## ▶ **Continue processes in homes and individuals**

- ▶ Family prayer and activities
- ▶ Small group gatherings
- ▶ Emphasize discipleship

# Tools



- ▶ Awakening Faith
- ▶ Small Groups
  - ▶ Faith Series
  - ▶ The Journey
- ▶ Invitation
  - ▶ Catholics Reaching Out
  - ▶ Neighbors Reaching Neighbors

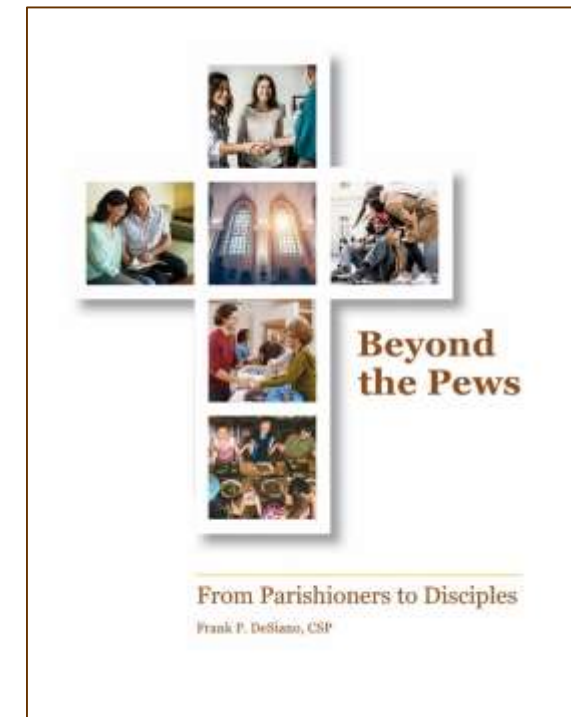
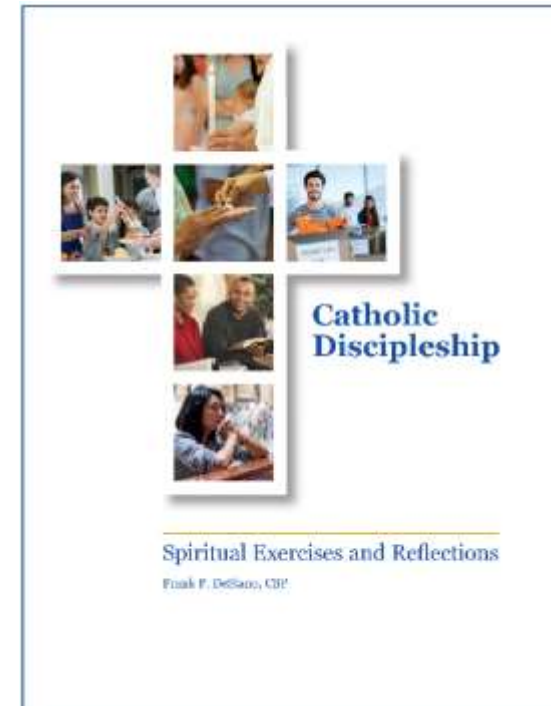




# Resources



- ▶ Catholic Discipleship
  - ▶ Por Discípulos Católicos
- ▶ Beyond the Pews
  - ▶ Más allá de las bancas



- ▶ [www.pemdc.org/disciples](http://www.pemdc.org/disciples)

# Contact



- ▶ Frank DeSiano, CSP
- ▶ Paulist Evangelization Ministries
- ▶ [www.pemdc.org](http://www.pemdc.org)
- ▶ [www.fpdesiano.com](http://www.fpdesiano.com)
- ▶ **online@pemdc.org**

