



Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church
2700 19th Street South, Arlington VA 22204
703-979-5580; fax 703-979-5590
www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org

April 5, 2020

Hello OLQP Family,

First and foremost, I hope this note finds each of you safe and adjusting ok to our “new normal” of sheltering in our homes during this coronavirus crisis. Please know that all of you remain in my thoughts and prayers! And I thank you for your kind thoughts and prayers these past few weeks as we all navigate through this worrisome and difficult time together.

Many of you have asked how you can help. Today I’m reaching out to provide details for one area of increased need that has become abundantly clear--- the OLQP Food Pantry. As you know, every Wednesday, the OLQP Food Pantry provides one bag of basic groceries to families in need. The number of families we serve has increased each of the past several weeks, and we anticipate that will only continue to grow. At the same time, with in-person masses suspended, our donations (both monetarily and food items) have considerably decreased. Combine those two factors and it is not difficult to appreciate the challenge we are facing.

While everything else in our parish has scaled back and otherwise paused during this pandemic, our entire parish leadership very strongly feels it is vital to keep the Food Pantry open and continue to serve this community in need. We have a small but mighty staff and volunteers that are committed to keeping this ministry going to the best of our abilities. It is because I am confident that you share these core values that I am reaching out to you to share this update and solicit your help.

There are three specific ways you can help us with the Food Pantry ministry.

1. **Charitable Financial Contribution.** Monetary donations of any amount are appreciated. You can contribute by going here: <https://www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org/donate.html> on the OLQP website. Once you are in the “donate” section of the OLQP site, you have a choice of where within OLQP you would like your contribution to go.
 - a. If you would like to contribute exclusively to the Food Pantry, click on “**OLQP Food Pantry**” and follow the directions to complete your donation.
 - b. Because our weekly offertory contributions have considerably decreased and we rely on these for the basic operations of the church including staff salaries for the people that are keeping the Food Pantry operational, I would be grateful for your consideration of an online general contribution to help us “keep the lights on”. If you follow the above “donate” link you will find a “**General Donation (one-time gift)**” button where you can make a general donation. I thank you for all the many ways you share your time, talent and treasure with us here at OLQP so we can continue living out our mission.
2. **Shop and drop off specific food items.** If you are able to directly buy some items for the Food Bank and drop them off at OLQP, that is appreciated. There will be a bin outside at the back of Fr. Ray Hall from 10am until 1pm Monday thru Friday. It will be under the overhead near the back door. On Mondays, two bins will be out in front of the handicap parking spots, which are located behind Fr. Ray Hall. Below is a list of the key food items that we strive to provide to each family in need each week.

“I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me...”

--Matthew 25:35

Shop and drop off specific food items (list)

- 1 bag of rice, any size (bigger ones will be split into a 1 lbs. bag)
- 1 bag of dry beans, 1 lbs. or two cans of beans (prefer black, pinto or small red beans)
- 1 pack of long or short pasta
- 1 jar of pasta sauce approx. 24 oz. (any flavor is great)
- 1 box of low sugar cereals (eg. Rice Krispies, Corn Flakes, Cheerios)
- 1 can of corn approx. 16 oz
- 1 can of green vegetables approx. 16 oz (eg. green beans, sweet peas)
- 1 can of fruit in light syrup or in its own juices
- 2 cans of tuna or packs of tuna in water or oil
- 1 bottle of oil, 48 oz.
- 1 bag of Tortimasa (no cornmeal)

3. **Volunteer Needs.** Most of the distributed food is bought in bulk and broken down into smaller servings for individual grocery bags. To this end, the following are our current volunteer needs.

- **(2) Food Sourcing Volunteers** –These volunteers will be calling the list of stores and other food sources (eg. Costco, BJ's, Restaurant Depot) each week to determine which of the Food Pantry needed items are in stock. Ultimately, these volunteers will be coming up with the shopping list and location for the volunteer grocery shoppers. Because so many stores are running out of items, the ideal volunteer for this role will have plenty of patience and persistence. When Plans A, B and C don't work out because the stores can't meet the demand, we are looking for creative and resourceful personalities who thrive on figuring out the plan even if that means getting all the way down to Plans X, Y and Z. The ideal volunteer for this role can commit to weekly or every other week outreach through mid-June.
- **(4) Bulk Grocery Shoppers** – For this role that involves receiving the grocery list and completing the grocery run for bulk items, the ideal volunteer will have a large car, be able to carry large amounts of heavy items and would be able to commit to weekly or every other week grocery runs through mid-June.
- **(1) Signage Volunteer** – Any budding artists among us? Signs are needed to clearly mark the bins where in-person donations will be received. This is a short term and immediate need. Perhaps ideal for one of our Religious Education families?
- **(1) Admin Assistant** – This ideal volunteer is someone with strong computer skills to help organize various aspects of this effort such as creating volunteer lists, organizing team calls and various other types of simple items that come up. Ideally would be able to commit through mid-June.

Contact information. **Sally Diaz-Wells** is OLQP's Social Justice & Outreach Minister, which includes oversight of the Food Pantry. She can be reached at sdiazwells@olqpva.org. If you would like to have your name added to the list of potential volunteer slots described above or have basic questions, please send to **Michaela Sims Stewart**, michaela_sims@hotmail.com. Michaela is a parishioner who is assisting Sally with Food Pantry surge during this crisis period including with coordination of volunteers.

I want to again thank you all for your amazing past and your continued support of the families who utilize the OLQP Food Pantry. It is only through your generosity that we are able to continue to help supplement their food needs, especially in this time of crisis.

Blessings,

Fr Tim