March 24, 2020

Dear friends and patrons of the Shrine,

As many of you already know, the governor and mayor issued "stay-at-home" orders yesterday for Philadelphia and some of the surrounding counties. In full support of these efforts to protect all of us during this pandemic, I have decided to close the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia until further notice.

It is not an easy or pleasant decision to close a place that means so much to so many people. Be assured that this decision is not made lightly, but with every hope of helping to prevent the spread of the coronavirus among our patrons, our staff, and our community.

Here are some important updates regarding this development:

- As of 12:00p.m. noon today, Tuesday, March 24, 2020, the lower and upper Shrine will be closed until further notice.
- While we will not be offering the sacrament of Reconciliation for the foreseeable future, we will continue to discern opportunities that may be appropriate to reopen the Shrine and offer confessions on a limited basis.
- We will continue to post updates and resources on our website, social media, and voicemail in an attempt to support clear communication, as well as opportunities for shared prayer.
- We will continue to monitor directives from health officials and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in order to make decisions that are both prudent and appropriate for the Shrine community.

Despite the closing of the Shrine, we remain united in faith and committed to the necessary mission and ministry of the Shrine. If you need something, even if you just need to talk to someone, please don't hesitate to reach out to one of our friars and/ or staff. We are remotely checking our phone messages and can easily arrange a phone call, a video conference, FaceTime, or a virtual meeting through the technology that's available online.

I want you to know that in these uncertain and strange times the friars and staff of the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia are here for you; we care about you. You and your loved ones continue to remain in our prayers.

Saint Rita, our advocate and protectress, pray for us.

Jonathan Jerome
Shrine Director

Augustinians on Staff
Fr. Bob Guesetto, O.S.A.
Fr. Dan McLaughlin, O.S.A.
Fr. Jim Paradis, O.S.A.
Fr. Bill Recchuti, O.S.A.
Fr. Jim Spenard, O.S.A.
Br. Bob Thornton, O.S.A.