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A note to my Parish Family:

I want to express my gratitude for your thoughts and prayers. It has been a difficult road and took me by surprise. I was so devastated and disappointed. I am sure I will recover from this one. I am so grateful for your love and support currently. I have been praying for all of you.

I want to clarify a few things:

I want to apologize for getting sick. I was not looking to get sick or to expose anyone from my congregation. I took the situation seriously and I am doing my best to protect us and each family. I was doing my best to protect myself and the community.

I am the chaplain from both hospitals Mercy and Freeman and I followed their guidelines and protocols while doing my ministry to the sick. In order to serve the hospitals, I was asked to get the Covid vaccine and for some reason I got sick after.

I followed the protocol and guidelines from the CDC. I was reporting my progress with the vaccine every 24 hours both to my doctor and to the CDC. I was in contact with my personal physician and everything was being monitored. I was informed that I was experiencing the side effects of the vaccine and it was part of the process.

I got extremely sick Sunday evening and the Department of health and my doctor asked me to go to the hospital and I did. That was when I found out I was positive for Covid.

As soon as I found out I was positive I contacted the Diocese. Following the Diocese's guidelines, I closed the Church immediately for a week.

I hope my explanation sounds clear. I was not sick prior receiving the vaccine. Many people know that I am healthy in general and I have a healthy lifestyle. I did my best to protect myself and the church. It can happen to any of us.

I feel bad for those who are disappointed or frustrated with the situation. What else do you want me to do?

I pray and I hope that people are more empathetic with the situation. Please call me if you have any questions. What kind of answers are you looking for? Please feel free to call me with any questions: Father Paco cell 773.993.2630

I recommend these things: if you consider it necessary, get tested. Second, place yourselves in quarantine or follow the CDC guidelines for indirect contact or limited exposure. If you experience any symptoms contact your family doctor immediately.

Finally, I am open to any ideas and recommendations.

God knows that I love the parish and I care for each person and each family. I cried when I got the results back because I knew I was going to be gone from my ministry for a few days and I will be missing celebrating mass with my people. I do not want my people sick or suffering from anything and especially from COVID.

In terms of the Church: we keep cleaning and disinfecting the common areas. If anyone has any ideas on how to protect the church from anything, I am ready to listen. We are in the process of getting the church clean from top to bottom. It is a detail cleaning, and it will give us the confidence to return safely later once I recovered.

I am praying for you and your families.

I was not planning to make everybody sick ... of course not!

I do not have any regrets with the situation. I apologize once again for getting sick and for making you too worried. I believe I have a great support system (Health Department, CDC and my personal Physician) and I followed their advice faithfully. I did everything they asked me to do and that is why I am shocked for what just happened.

My common sense tells me that if I knew I was somehow sick I will let people know immediately. It is highly recommended by providers and the guidelines from the Diocese.

May the Lord help us to get through this episode and give us the grace to highly value our lives and our health.

Yours in Christ,

Father Paco