



*Office of Archbishop Alexander K. Sample*

March 26, 2020

My dear brothers and sisters,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

As your local shepherd, I want to assure you of my continued prayers for you. These are challenging times that call us to seek God with all our hearts.

Governor Brown's "Stay Home, Save Lives" order requires us to remain home to the "maximum extent possible" for our own sakes and the sake of others, especially those who are vulnerable. This is why we are closing our parish offices and schools to the public and asking our staffs to work remotely and give instruction online. Essential pastoral activities that must continue will observe strictly the social distancing requirements. To the extent possible, our churches will be open during scheduled hours as determined and published by the pastor so individuals can come to pray. Confessions, wherever possible will still be offered, and emergency pastoral needs will be met. Many of our parishes will continue to operate food pantries to serve those who need food. We will continue to livestream Masses so that the faithful can remain prayerfully and spiritually connected to the Church and to God.

The normal practice of our faith and mission has been disrupted, and we must refrain from gathering physically for a time. This painful reality is an invitation to deepen our faith and live it more fully. Though we are fettered, the wind of the Spirit blows where it will. God is still here for you, and you remain part of the family of faith that is the Catholic Church.

We pray for the sick in our community, for their families, for health care workers, and for leaders who are diligently working to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Together, we are checking on our neighbors, livestreaming Masses, supporting our parishes and schools, and above all living as disciples of Jesus Christ, despite these temporary restrictions.

Please keep in your prayers all our priests, deacons, women and men religious, and all the lay faithful who in different ways exercise pastoral care and responsibilities. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis reminds us, "let us pray that the Holy Spirit give pastors the capacity for pastoral discernment, so they find measures that don't leave the holy faithful people of God alone, so that the people of God feel accompanied by their pastors and draw comfort from the Word of God, the sacraments, and prayer."

My grateful and heartfelt thanks and appreciation for all those who have risen to the occasion and come forward in our time of need. The Church in western Oregon is enriched by your commitment and selflessness. You give witness to the example and challenge of Jesus, who "came to serve and not to be served".

Please know that I continue to pray for you and your families. I invite you to join me for the livestreamed Sunday Mass at 11:00 AM at the Cathedral. Additionally, please join me on Friday evenings at 6pm for livestreamed prayer as we strive to maintain and strengthen our communion as the mystical body of Christ, the Church. Links to these and other prayer opportunities can be found on the Archdiocese of Portland website homepage at: [www.archdpdx.org](http://www.archdpdx.org).

Great challenges and difficulties are moments of great opportunity. We face a moment where the witness of our lives and faith can shine brightly in a world that seeks hope. Pope Benedict XIV said: “A world without God is a world without hope.” The world needs hope. Let us bring it God. May we reflect the courage, kindness, generosity, sacrifice, selfless love, and service that come from our relationship with Jesus Christ and our Catholic faith.

Mary, the Immaculate Conception, patroness of our archdiocese, Pray for Us!

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alexander K. Sample". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a cross symbol at the beginning.

Most Reverend Alexander K. Sample  
*Archbishop of Portland in Oregon*