



Sts. Mary & Edward Catholic Church
Rev. William Rodriguez, Pastor

April 5, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters:

The whole world is shocked with the pandemic of “coronavirus” (Covid-19) spreading so fast, upsetting all social aspects, religious, civil, sanitary, and economic, altering profoundly our ordinary life. It seemed like people lived in a stable world, and confidently following a usual routine. However, a small virus was enough to get everything out of control.

This situation has caused a deep and wide crisis with serious social and economic consequences; especially for the less privileged and with less resources; as well as for all who are unemployed. In a world where productivity and consumerism prevail, everything has been stopped; what looked more important and the reason of society has been blocked.

The generous and supportive response of everybody is appreciated, both institutionally and individually. Every single one of us has the responsibility to care for the most afflicted with this situation and to offer them our support and care.

This new experience forces us to leave the superfluous, and to focus on what is essential for our live and to turn our eyes to God, as the foundation of our existence; because we are called to live His love for all eternity and this is what true happiness is about.

God holds us, to face this situation that affects all with confidence and responsibility. The human being created in the image of God, discovers his sacredness in silence, enjoying the beauty of daily living; in a transcendental gaze; in valuing the presence of others; in those so many talents received but not always used in a fruitful way; and over all, discovering the sacredness of human life, that must be respected in every stage.

The difficult situation of this world crisis that we are experiencing has startled us, has shaken our minds and showed us how to live our Christian faith immersed in this pandemic. The Liturgical Season in which we are now; it’s a time of grace to revive the good purposes of conversion and to continue our Lenten journey through Easter in the right way.

The Christian faithful have been preparing for the usual Lenten penance, deep prayer, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, fasting, abstinence, piety acts (Via Crucis, celebrations), the long readings of the Word of God. And now, everything is falling apart because of this invisible host, that has brought a deadly panic in the population,

We have never seen something similar; nobody has ever had a similar experience. In past years we stayed at home because we were sick or during inclement weather but staying at home without being able to attend Mass is unbelievable.

Immersed in this new unprecedented experience, we must take our Christian commitment and adapt ourselves to these adverse circumstances. We are invited to do what we need to do in solidarity with everybody to avoid spreading of this virus. Staying at home, leaving our plans and projects aside for now is the best example we can give.

In these difficult days we need to maintain calm, prudence, patience and continue assuming our Christian commitment of compassion for the sick and for the ones that need the most, acting as good Samaritans, as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us, this is what make us believe in our Church.

This pandemic is giving us the opportunity to care for our brother that is weak or in need, for the sick and for the elderly. This virus does not understand of borders between human beings, ethnicity, culture, language, religion. We all are equal with the same dignity.

I invite all of you to strengthen your reading and meditation of the Word of God. Let's live the presence of Our Lord that speak to us in prayer, in our personal time with Him as he did with the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar (cf. Jn 4, 5-42). He reveals to us the truth about ourselves and invite us to look with the eyes of transcendence the reality of our life. He remembers us that we need to worship God in spirit and truth, even if we cannot go to Church.

These days we have many resources, especially online to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, to read the daily biblical texts and Sunday readings. Meditate on the Gospel will help us to place God as the center of our lives; and will make us better evangelizers, even if we use the networks. Also, we can share messages and audiovisuals with good messages. During these days that we will spend a lot of time at home, we can see movies, selected for their values and criteria of kindness, truth, beauty and religiousness.

I invite you, from home, to raise your prayer to Our Lord for the sick, especially for all who are suffering from coronavirus, for the ones that left this world for this cause and for their families. Let's pray for all who are serving the humanity from the workplaces, especially for the doctors and health staff. Let's pray for all who have the responsibility to make decisions, for the security forces, for those who are working during these days serving the community, for the parents that take care of their families especially the children that are confused with this situation.

The traditional prayer of the Holy Rosary in family will have a place during these days asking the Holy Virgin Mary, our mother for the health of the sick. In addition of the Healing of the bodies, let's ask for the healing of souls. During these days let's renew our love for God and for our neighbors.

Let's pray the prayer that Pope Francis has offered us for these days, that ends with an old Marian prayer: "We fly to thy protection Oh Holy Mother of God, Despise not our petitions of our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers Oh Glorious and Blessed Virgin."

For me as a Priest it is unusual and painful to celebrate the Holy Eucharist without the participation of the faithful especially during this Holy Week; but the Church continues worshiping God and celebrating the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ death and resurrection for our salvation.

The big Christian Feast of Easter will not be cancelled or postponed. Even though the faithful cannot participate of the Holy Eucharist, even though we cannot leave our homes, we will celebrate Easter with great faith and truth. As I have already said in my previous messages, we can follow the Liturgical Celebrations through the media.

We can stay at home watching and meditating the scenes of the Passion and death of Our Lord, that will be offered in the different social media. All united in sincere prayer and in joyful piety, will celebrate the Lord's Passover, so that it also passes through our lives. Even though we live this Easter in a different way from past years, let it be a moment of profound encounter with our Lord. He continues saving us, redeeming and forgiving our sins. We adore His Cross and glorify His Resurrection. Through Him, salvation has come to the whole world. «If we die with him, we will live with him; if we persevere, we will also reign with Him. » (2 Tm 2,11-12).

I wish you all a fruitful Holy Week as a way to Easter, a joyous conversion to God, a greater attitude of love for our brothers and sisters, especially for the sick and the ones that are in need, and a luminous celebration of the Paschal Mystery. That our mother the Virgin Mary with her example will help us to value the taste of everyday simplicity, the taste of the little things, the happiness of living, the joy of silence and the power to enjoy our loved ones. She encourages to care for who is close to us and to live these days in the silence of our home.

**We ask our Holy Virgin Mary, to achieve the desired victory
in the fight against evil.**

Fraternally with my blessings in Christ.

Father William Rodríguez