



Diocese of Monterey

+Most Reverend Daniel E. Garcia

Office of the Bishop

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July 16, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Due to the increased spike in positive COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, Governor Newsom sent out on July 13th new directives that affect 'places of worship' and our church offices. The orders apply only to counties that have been on the watch list for three consecutive days or longer. At this point, *this only applies to the counties of Monterey, San Benito and San Luis Obispo*. A major priority continues to be the well-being and common good of all the faithful, our employees and our respective communities, and as such, we are immediately responding to these new guidelines.

The order impacts all indoor church services, which will need to be temporarily suspended until further notice, while outdoor services are allowed. Also, our parish offices must remain closed until further notice.

I understand this is troubling and difficult for many, which creates a very stressful time for all of us. I fully realize that some of our parishes will have greater difficulties or limitations to move worship services outdoors, if at all possible. Yet, as I mentioned last March as we began to experience our 'shelter-in' order, we must be flexible due to the circumstances at hand. As you can clearly see, we are 'not' in control of this virus and after 135,000 deaths in just a few short months, we treat this very seriously. People continue to get sick, become hospitalized and die from this Coronavirus. Thus, we must do all that we can to protect one another and ourselves from the spread of this illness.

I am keenly aware that some of you are particularly concerned because you rightfully feel the need to celebrate and receive the Eucharist. I certainly understand this desire, but I must balance this with the necessary caution to protect our faithful from becoming sick or the possible spreading of the disease.

I once again thank you for your understanding and patience. Please be supportive of your pastors and priests, who together with me are trying to do our best to serve you in these uncertain times. We all yearn to get back to some kind of normalcy. I invite you to try to not lose hope or become disillusioned. During these troubled days, I am very often comforted by the Psalms from the Hebrew Scriptures. One particular refrain that I have often said during these trying times is from Psalm 94: *The Lord will not abandon his people*. God is here with us, even amidst all the unrest and chaos of the present days. Let us continue to support each other and not allow division to obstruct our need to be Christ for one another. Be assured of my prayers for you and your family. I ask you to pray for me that I may be a good servant of the Lord.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Daniel E. Garcia
Bishop of Monterey