

## Let the Peace of Christ Rule in Your Hearts – Colossians 3:15

The new coronavirus, COVID-19, has proven to be very contagious, bringing with it a confusing storm of fear, misinformation, and anxiety. What does the future hold? How worried should we be? How bad is it going to get?

However, although it is necessary to plan, we must not lose sight of the One who can deliver us from every evil and keep us safe from all distress. Thanks be to God; we have access to a confidence and peace that the world cannot give. That is what I want to emphasize at the outset for everyone in the parish – Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever, and in Him we have nothing to fear. Keep your eyes focused on Christ and be secure in the hope that He offers us through His resurrection. He has opened to us a world where there is no pain, suffering, fear, or anxiety, where for all eternity we will be able to enjoy the infinite bliss of knowing our Creator. He has reconciled us to the living God, He forgives us our sins, and He offers the gift of His own life, the Holy Spirit. I pray that in these confusing times God would bless us anew and pour out His healing grace on everyone.

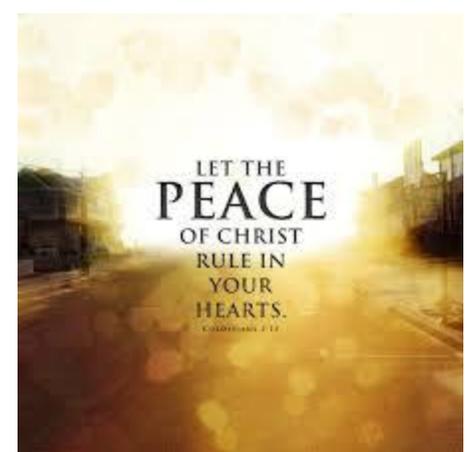
Moreover, while maintaining our connection to the Lord, we also need to be safe and do everything we can to combat the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, in following the guidelines of our government and the leading experts, the Diocese of Victoria is

implementing strict policies of social distancing through the end of March. As the bishop states in his decree, “[Not only Masses but a]ll scheduled events in our parishes are also cancelled, so as to protect the faithful from possible infection. This includes Penance Services, Stations of the Cross, RCIA, religious education classes, adult formation classes and any and all other liturgical gatherings, meetings and activities.” Even if you do not feel sick or you are young and healthy, you can still be a carrier. Help us fight against COVID-19 by washing your hands regularly, staying home, and keeping your distance.

Lastly, in order to support everyone spiritually, we will be developing a resource to help you pray along with the Mass at home and stay united to everyone in the parish and diocese. Even though regularly scheduled Masses will be canceled, and the Sunday obligation lifted for Catholics in the Victoria Diocese, our priests will be required to celebrate Mass without the congregation. This Mass I will offer every day for the parishioners of Our Lady of Sorrows and Santísima Trinidad.

May God  
Bless You and  
Keep You,

Fr. Jacob  
Koether



**READINGS FOR THE WEEK**  
**LECTURAS PARA LA SEMANA**

**Monday**

**Dn 13; Ps 23; Jn 6:1-11**

**Tuesday**

**Num 21:4-9; Ps 102; Jn 8:21-30**

**Wednesday**

**Dn 3; Dn 3; Jn 8:31-42**

**Thursday**

**Gen 17:3-9; Ps 105; Jn 8:51-59**

**Friday**

**Jer 20:10-13; Ps 18; Jn 10:31-42**

**Saturday**

**Ez 37:21-28; Jer 31; Jn 11:45-56**

**Sunday**

**Is 50:4-7; Ps 22; Phil 2:6-11; Matt 26-27**

**SANCTUARY LAMPS**

Our Lady of Sorrows Sanctuary  
 Lamp In Memory  
 of Joe, Beatrice, Leonora  
 Juanita Delgado  
 By- Family



Although the Masses that were scheduled will be closed to the public, the Mass Intentions will still be celebrated by Frs Jacob, Patiño, and Parmenio every day

**MASSES FOR THE WEEK**  
**MISAS DE LA SEMANA**

Sábado	5:00 p.m	Manuel Rodrigueuz
Sunday	8:30 a.m.	Henry Vasquez
	10:30 a.m.	Susana Villa
	1:00 p.m	Joe/Beatrice/Leonora Nita Deleon
Domingo	9:30 a.m.	Franisco Garza
	11:30 a.m	Alicia Guerrero
Monday	7:00 a.m.	Ricardo Montes
Tuesday	7:00 a.m	Emilo Luna
Wednesday	7:00 a.m.	Felipa/Maria/Rosita Carlos Sanchez
Thursday	7:00 a.m.	John G. Escalona
Jueves	7:00 p.m.	Jesus Casto
Friday	7:00 a.m.	Martina Martinez
Sábado	5:00 p.m	Consulo Trevino
Sunday	8:30 a.m.	Lalo Cisneros
	10:30 a.m.	Dolores/Henry/Joe/Little Joe Esrtada and Carmen Cano
	1:00 p.m	Manuel/Monica/ David Gujardo
Domingo	9:30 a.m.	Olivia Rochoa Rosario Torres
	11:30 a.m	All the Parisheriones

**MASS INTENTIONS**

We are currently scheduling  
 Mass Intentions for  
 January – June 2020.

*Mass Intentions*



*Estamos programando  
 sus intenciones  
 por la Misa al presente.*

## **PLEASE GIVE ONLINE!**

Thank you everyone who has signed up for online giving. We understand that many people are struggling right now, and we are grateful for your contribution. If you have not signed up for online giving yet, there is always time. To give digitally, you can do so by clicking on the link at our website under Giving: <https://pushpay.com/g/olsvictoria>

or you can text the keyword “olsvictoria” to 77977 and get started right from your smartphone!



### **MAY THEY REST IN PEACE**

Please pray for the repose of the souls of

Viviana Escalona Dolores Martinez and Nick Salazar May they rest in peace and their families be comforted.

*Favor de rezar por al almas de Viviana Escalona, Dolores Martinez y Nick Salazar. Que sus almas descañe en paz y que su familias recibe Consuelo.*

### **SHUT-IN MINISTRY**

In this time of social distancing, the ministers of the diocese are being discouraged from doing regular visits to the home.

But if you have a loved one who is in need of prayer, confession, communion, or anointing of the sick, we still want them to feel connected to the parish and to know that there are people who will try to help them.

Contact: Minnie Castillo at 361-550-7217

### **OUR WEEKLY PARISH SUPPORT For Week Ending March 22, 2020**

	<b>OLS</b>	<b>ST</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Collection	\$651.00	\$200.00
DSA	\$10.00	
Debt Reduction	\$408.00	
Online Giving	\$1,010.00	
Sub-Total	\$1,479.00	
Rice Boowls	\$20.00	
Catholic Relief	\$35.00	
Ester Flowers	\$38.00	
Grand Total	\$1,572.00	\$200.00

### **WHAT ABOUT CONFESSIONS?!**

Call the office at any time to set up an appointment for confession. You can also email Fr. Jacob at [frjacobkoether@ourladyssorrows.org](mailto:frjacobkoether@ourladyssorrows.org).

### **EXCERPTS FROM BISHOP CAHILL'S MESSAGE ON COVID-19**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In accordance with the guidelines of President Trump and our local authorities, I am requiring that priests begin celebrating Masses without a congregation. All people can join in spiritual communion from their homes, with the assurance that the sacrifice of praise is being offered for the health and salvation of the world. Indeed, the salvation of souls remains the mission of the Church, and we follow these guidelines specifically for that mission.

National, state and local government officials have stressed the need to limit the number of people who can gather in one place at the same time. The call is

to act responsibly for the protection of all in our communities. Therefore, effective today, and until March 31, our priests in the Diocese of Victoria will continue to daily celebrate the Eucharist in their parishes, but will do so without a congregation.

This decision was made after much prayer and discernment, recognizing that large gatherings are a factor in the spread of this disease. Therefore, in order to discourage public gatherings, I decree that ALL Catholics of the Diocese of Victoria in Texas are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and other holy days of obligations, until March 31.

The Mass is televised live from the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory in Victoria on Sundays at 9 a.m. on KAVU television and live-streamed at [www.olvcathedral.org](http://www.olvcathedral.org). In addition, the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass from Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Hallettsville is broadcast on Texas Thunder Radio (99.9 FM) or by downloading the free TUNEIN app to hear the Mass. In addition, there are national broadcasts of the Sunday Mass on various cable networks. Though not able to attend Mass, the faithful are encouraged to pray in their homes. Spiritual Communion can also be made at any time. In doing so, we unite ourselves to God and the Church in prayer, when unable to physically receive the Holy Eucharist.

I encourage us to catechize and evangelize using modern communication methods. Especially as we deal with issues of fear, suffering and death, our teaching from Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church offers hope in Jesus Christ.

Visits to the homebound, nursing care facilities and hospitals are also discouraged, except in cases of pastoral necessity and emergencies. When visiting such facilities, clergy and others are to follow protocols set by the Center for Disease Control, in regard to good hygiene practices, before, during and after such visits.

All scheduled events in our parishes are also cancelled, so as to protect the faithful from possible infection. This includes Penance Services, Stations of the Cross, RCIA, religious education classes, adult

formation classes and any and all other liturgical gatherings, meetings and activities...

Weddings, funerals and baptisms will continue, but attendance will be limited to ten (10) immediate family members. Confirmations will be postponed and rescheduled...

Our parish churches and missions will remain open for private prayer and Adoration, as long as this does not pose a risk to the public. Protocols for social distancing are to be practiced...

I ask the faithful to continue to support their parish community through on-line giving or by mail. This will ensure parishes are able to meet payrolls and pay monthly bills...

Stringent measures must be taken in situations of national emergencies. May these efforts, difficult as they are, be our way, in the Diocese of Victoria, of helping to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Let us pray for those who have died from this disease, for the healing of those who have been affected by it throughout the world and for an abrupt end to it. We turn to our loving God and implore his protection. Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

Let's keep each other in prayer.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Bishop Brendan J. Cahill

### **SACRIFICING THE MASS: Under the coronavirus outbreak, it's our duty to stay home**

This is the saddest of all losses for a faithful Catholic. It is also the cost of taking responsibility for one another. "Where is everybody? I'm the one who's supposedly at risk!" "They're at home; protecting you."

This exchange between an elderly parishioner and a pastor in my diocese took place this past Sunday. This was the first weekend for which our bishop had dispensed the faithful from our Mass obligation because of the novel coronavirus outbreak. In other

dioceses across the country and world, public Masses were canceled altogether. Our diocese has since followed suit. When I heard that our bishop had issued the dispensation, I felt anxious. It was not anxiety about the virus itself; it was anxiety about the choice of whether or not to attend Mass with my family a few days later. It was an ideal situation for Catholic guilt: we could go to Mass, yet we didn't have to. With all the uncertainty about the presence of the virus and how it is hiding in plain sight, I was of course worried about my wife and my children, even myself. It was not in thinking about our family that I finally came to the clear decision about not attending Mass at our parish on Sunday. It was by thinking about people like this elderly parishioner that clarity dawned on me. We might be carriers—I might be a carrier—and that puts others at risk in a public setting. That is a serious thought. It is also a social thought. That is the great challenge for most of us in this pandemic: thinking socially rather than individually. I could go to Mass or I desire to go to Mass, but I am responsible not just for the risk to myself and my family, but to others as well. We are responsible for each other. At the time of this writing, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urge that we refrain from or cancel gatherings of 50 persons or more because of the threat of the virus's rapid spread, which would overwhelm our hospitals and medical resources, thus creating a grave social crisis such as Italy is already facing. Soon thereafter, the directive to the nation was adjusted to discouraging gatherings of 10 persons or more. This means that dispensations like my own bishop announced for this past weekend will soon become the outright cancellation of public Masses in most if not all dioceses, as has now happened in ours. The Mass will still be offered—even offered for us—but we will not be there. This is the saddest of all losses for a faithful Catholic. It is also the cost of taking responsibility for one another. Many Catholics whom I admire and respect oppose the cancellation of public Masses. I feel their frustration and their sadness, and yet I disagree with them. Yes, Christ is our strength and our hope, who gives himself to us in the sacrifice of the Mass. And yes, it is our duty and our delight to join ourselves in person to his sacrifice in the Sunday liturgy—indeed, it is our “obligation.”

But if we arrive to make our offering at the Sunday liturgy while having offended our neighbor, we must first go and reconcile before approaching the altar. Or

if on the way to Mass we were to see someone in need, we must not pass by on the other side but rather go down into the ditch to tend to their wounds. And likewise, if gathering together for the Sunday Mass might make victims of some of our members or cause the pain and suffering of others in our community, then it is our duty to abstain from our regular obligation. This duty is not merely civic; it is religious. I am reminded of Shūsaku Endo's haunting novel, *Silence*, because the crucial question at the heart of the drama is not about one's own wellbeing, but the wellbeing of others. The Jesuit missionary refuses to apostatize to save himself from suffering at the hands of his persecutors. His shrewd persecutors do not lay his own wellbeing before him, though; instead, they give him the choice to relieve or perpetuate the suffering of others. Should he, the missionary, refuse to stomp on the face of Christ, others will be tortured and killed. In obedience to Christ, then, the missionary denies Christ and saves others. He denies Christ to follow Christ, or at least that is what one is left to ponder at the end of the novel. We are not talking about apostasy here. We are talking about the sacrifice of the Mass. Indeed, we are talking about the privilege of celebrating the Mass together and, for many, personally receiving the Eucharist. We are talking about sacrificing that for the sake of our brothers and sisters. We are talking about making a personal and social sacrifice with a special preference for the elderly and the most vulnerable among us. We are talking about a sacrifice for the wellbeing of the medical professionals who will care for the sick in the coming weeks, even beyond the capacities our hospitals and supplies can absorb.

The cancelling of public Masses or even heeding a dispensation from Mass is, in some ways, an excessive response on the individual level. The risk to any individual of being infected remains low. But systemic precaution at the early stages of a pandemic such as this is not merely some “best practice;” it may well be a moral imperative. This concerns a cooperative and collective action to save others and promote a social good. This collective action requires individual sacrifice. For Catholics who are called upon to forgo participating in the celebration of the Mass, that is a serious sacrifice, a social sacrifice, and it might be the holiest sacrifice we can make right now.

“Where is everybody?”

“They’re at home, protecting you.”