

December 28, 2020

Beloved Parishioners of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem Parish:

The Los Angeles County Department of Health recently issued revised guidelines giving houses of worship the option to hold services indoors and outdoors. However, the Dept. of Public Health strongly urges houses of worship to continue holding services outdoors and in a letter to priests Archbishop Gomez has noted that it is safer to continue celebrating Mass outdoors.

During the current deadly surge of the coronavirus, we are seeing alarming numbers of new infections, hospitalizations and deaths on a daily basis that is overwhelming our healthcare system and pushing healthcare workers to the breaking point. Health experts also warn of a post-Christmas/New Year “surge upon a surge” and a mutation of the coronavirus that is 70% more contagious than the previous strain!

As your shepherd, my duty is to protect the flock, many of whom are vulnerable due to age or health condition. After careful prayer and consultation, I have determined that it would be reckless and irresponsible for us to resume indoor worship at this time. Therefore, Saint Cyril’s will continue celebrating outdoor and livestream Masses until further notice.

I recognize that this decision may be disappointing. It is for me, too. Like you, I long to gather inside our church as a family of faith to share in the Eucharist together, but during this dangerous surge in the pandemic, I am convinced that continuing to hold worship outdoors is the morally correct course of action.

I invite us to view this inconvenience as a necessary sacrifice we make out of love and charity toward others and out of our moral duty to protect life. We also offer these sacrifices in solidarity with the brave doctors, nurses, EMTs, and other healthcare professionals who are sacrificing their own health every day to care for the sick.

We will continue to monitor the situation and as soon as conditions improve to the point that we can return to indoor worship in a safe and responsible manner, we will certainly do so. In the meantime, I implore us all to be vigilant following the recommended health protocols: wear a face mask, watch your distance, wash your hands, and avoid gathering with anyone outside your immediate household. Working together, we can help slow the spread of the virus!

Let us pray for all those who are infected, those who are vulnerable, those who have lost their lives to this disease and the loved ones who mourn them. May God bless, strengthen, and protect the brave healthcare workers who are caring for the sick. Finally, let us pray that the vaccines that are now being administered will prove effective in slowing the spread of the virus and begin to bring about an end to this deadly pandemic so that we can one day soon resume a more normal way of life and worship. Mary, Health of the Sick, pray for us!

You are in my prayers,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Mac".

Rev. Eben M. MacDonald, Pastor