



## **St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Community**

### **COVID-19 Update and Impact on Parish Activities**

*May 14, 2020*

Dear Parishioners,

The updates we are receiving through the Archbishop and our health officers for the County of Los Angeles are not promising and often confusing. As you have heard on the local news, Dr. Barbara Ferrera and Mayor Garcia are stating that the “Stay at Home” directives will in all probability be extended through July or August, although they corrected themselves to say the order will be adapted as we phase in reopening along the way. You may have also heard that the CSU system of universities and other schools have already indicated that their Fall semester will be conducted mostly through online learning.

In the meantime, the Archdiocese is formulating a “phased” plan for reopening whenever that will be allowed. Phase One will consist of only opening the church or chapel for individual prayer. However, there will be safety protocols in place (physical distancing, mask wearing, sanitizing regularly, limited # of people, etc.) Until new directives and safety protocols are promulgated, I cannot say for sure.

I have just wrapped up our webinar with Archbishop Gomez and all the priests of the ADLA. He did not have any more information or answers for us. The public celebration of mass is suspended until further notice. While we hope to open our church for prayer (less than ten people, sanitizing, masks, etc.) sometime soon, no date can be given.

The sacraments, especially our First Communions and Confirmation, have all been postponed until we can open for these celebrations and even then, it will be limited in number. All weddings are postponed until such a time that they may take place. Obviously, with 600 priests online there were many suggestions and opinions expressed. Ultimately, the basis of our decision is to reflect our “pro-life” Church and to protect the most vulnerable. In other words, “we, the Church” do NOT want to be the source of causing further spread of COVID-19 because we were reckless in our approach or preparation to reopen when we do in the future. The bottom line is our future is going to be very different and creative in the coming months and year and we need to realize that this is a new reality for everyone.

Each one of us is struggling with this new reality. We are tired of being cooped up. However, we must also realize that this time has allowed us extra time with God in prayer and a break from the “samo – samo” approach to faith and life. God’s invitation to us is to discover Him in new ways and to be creative in our response. An invitation to give up old patterns and allow in this Easter season “new life” to emerge. A suffering brought upon us that ties us more intimately into the sufferings of Christ and others.

As I have been doing, once I know something, I pass it on. This is what I know to date. I’m sorry it is not more certain news or good news. But we live in the hope of the good news that is the person of Jesus Christ and His Church. Thank you for your generosity. Continue to support your parish during these tough times. As I prepare the budget for next year, it will be difficult in this new reality and we may need to make some tough decisions in how to proceed ahead. Together in this journey we give thanks to God for each other and our own individual generous response.

We miss you, we bless you, and we pray for you!

*Fr. Mark*

## Reflections with Fr. Mark

Today we celebrate the Feast of St. Matthias (Apostle) who was chosen to replace Judas as one of the Twelve. We do not know much about Matthias, but “tradition” teaches us that he may have preached around the area of Judea and then was eventually persecuted and martyred. Not many details are known about him and those that are available are unreliable. However, what we do know, is that he stepped in when needed and called upon and agreed to join the apostles following Jesus’ death and resurrection. We are called by name to do the same.



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The early Church grew in its witness to the Risen Lord and the faith began to spread like a wildfire. In our world today, we witness the Church growing, yet struggling in its attempt to evangelize in a secular world and material society. Yes, the faith continues to spread through the generous ministry of multitudes throughout the world and those who have dedicated their lives to such specific ministry. However, each one of us, “the Baptized,” are called to evangelize in the marketplace by our own witness to the love of Christ. How do you live out your calling?

Remember, we are not all called to the same function, ministry or vocation. We are not all the same part; but, are “part” of the Body of Christ. Just as St. Paul reminds us in his letters, we all have our part (as living stones) in building the structure of the Church with Christ as the cornerstone. The important point here: **CHRIST IS THE CORNERSTONE.**

When we attempt to build without Christ or to exist apart from Him, we are destined to fail. And, so the Church, as a people of God fail when God is not the home base from which we start. We have witnessed this failure throughout all of human history; and, rather than point to the fault of time or person we must simply look into our own heart and ask, once again: “How do I live out my calling (by virtue of my baptism)?”

St. Matthias responded in the early Church when the Church was in need. How will you respond today while the Church is in need once again?

**FYI** – *Later today I will be on a webinar meeting with the Archbishop. I will share with you tomorrow any news coming out of the Archdiocese regarding the current directives in place. We have already heard that our schools will not be resuming “on site” learning for the remainder of this school year; however, we hope to resume normal operations with our next academic year around Aug. 12.*

*Happy Easter! He is Risen! Alleluia!*

**Watch Sunday Mass from St. Luke at Home:** The recordings are available on our Parish website, [www.stluketemplecity.org](http://www.stluketemplecity.org), and sent through our e-communications. The services will remain posted so you may view at your convenience.

Please visit our Parish Website for continued COVID-19 information related to parish activities and previous e-communications: <https://stluketemplecity.org/covid-19>