



Embracing God's People • Equipping Disciples • Accompanying Believers

May 30, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The last time I scrambled so much in recent memory was when we began to systematically adapt our normal models of behavior here at Church in response to the COVID-19 related “Safer at Home” orders last March. The first three weeks were pretty demanding, and crazy though it might sound, the physical closing of the Church building might have made it seem like there was less to do around here, but the opposite was, in fact, the case. With the announcement by Archbishop Gomez that we could at last begin to prepare for re-opening our Church buildings, and the gradual reintroduction of the sacramental life of our Church, it began a new rush of chaos here at Lourdes. Last Monday, the Governor announced State guidelines for houses of worship reopening, followed by the release on Tuesday of County and City guidelines. Though it was a lot of reading and there are many things to still be worked out, I couldn't help but be excited by the prospect of the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel seeming a lot closer. Before sharing more information about our steps toward reopening the physical campus, I'd like to draw your attention to a couple of items.

First, this weekend we will celebrate the great **Feast of Pentecost** and the “birthday of the Church” To mark the occasion, we will be hosting a **Food Drive on Sunday morning**.

The Food Drive will benefit local organizations who work with so many to alleviate hunger and to address immediate needs, such as MEND and the Guadalupe Center. The Food Drive is scheduled to take place **between 10:30am and 12:30pm on Sunday**. If you can, please have donated **perishable food items** bagged or boxed in your trunk or rear-seat. **Please do not exit your vehicle**. Volunteers will be on hand to receive the items without you leaving your vehicle. Enter the parking lot through the main gate on Kinzie St (closest to Reseda), follow the traffic flow to the **drop-off area by STROUP HALL**, and continue on to exit by the Parish Center and out onto Superior Street.

Second, on Wednesday next, June 3rd, we are hosting the **American Red Cross** for a **Blood Drive**. More information about the details and times are available on our [parish website](#). I encourage everyone who can to participate by going online, signing up for an appointment, and donating blood. Walk-ins are also welcome.

The Further Adventures of Mollie Loftus

Yesterday my sister forwarded a video clip of my 3yr-old niece being reunited with her Dad following a nearly 3-month separation. It broke my heart to watch it, and left tears filling my eyes and rolling down my face. For those who aren't aware, because of the nature of his work, my brother has been separated from his wife Claire and his daughter, Mollie. Claire is expecting their second child, and together with Mollie, she has been living with my sister in the West of Ireland, far from their own home. Mollie hadn't seen her dad in the flesh for months. Yesterday, that changed as he began a leave from his work and joined them for the first time.



As his car pulled up, Mollie recognized it immediately and got so excited. She began shouting "It's Daddy! It's Daddy!" My brother got out of the car and hunkered down with his arms open to Mollie, inviting her to come and give him a hug. She began to run toward him and then stopped herself.

At first no one understood what was happening. Her mom moved beside her and Mollie whispered "I can't". We were all surprised. Claire picked her daughter up and moved the last couple of feet over to my brother, and they shared a brief group hug before Mollie climbed onto my brother and wrapped herself fully around his neck, crying and laughing at the same time.

What had happened was that Mollie has learned in these crazy days that she can't just hug people, even the people she loves. She holds back from her granny and her grandpa. She holds back from her cousins. She has learned that she needs to stay back, and to leave space between herself and everyone else. As she moved toward her Daddy, she remembered that she couldn't just go over and hug him. It wasn't until her mammy picked her up and made it ok, that she just wrapped herself around her Daddy's neck and the world somehow, for this little 3yr-old at least, began to right itself once again.



Reopening Church Buildings and Returning to Public Celebration of the Eucharist

As I noted above, we have begun to enter the final stages of our time without public celebrations of the Eucharist. I know that the announcements by different public leaders and by the Archbishop, this past week, have created a sense of anticipation for some and quite a bit of concern for others.

I am very happy to announce that here at Lourdes we have taken the first steps required of us to secure the safe reopening of our Church for public celebrations of the Eucharist. That said, I don't want anyone thinking it's going to be happening within the next week or so. It will take us a little longer to put the final pieces in place to reopen our worship space for public participation in the Eucharist.

Just like Mollie meeting her daddy again for the first time in a while, reengaging in public mass is not going to be a simple or straightforward experience. There will be restrictions on the numbers of people who can be present, and there will be behaviors that will be essential on the part of all who are involved. The celebration of the Mass to which we return will not look like any celebration of the Mass we had before we suspended public worship over two months ago. It will be a greatly modified and curtailed experience. But it will be a beginning, a tentative first step towards that day when we will fully restore our public worship and celebration of the Sacraments.

With safety and concern for the health and well-being of our community paramount in my heart and mind, I have convened a **committee** of professionals - medical and other - along with staff and parishioners, to advise us on this important endeavor. Their work will be immediate and swift, while being thorough and comprehensive, as we draft a plan for submission to the local bishop for approval of our reopening.

We are preparing resources to facilitate the contact-tracing required in the event of an outbreak, and this will likely involve some form of pre-registration or sign-up ahead of time. No more than 100 people may be in our building at any one time. We will have check-ins, hand sanitizing, everyone will be wearing masks in church, seating will be assigned, we will utilize single door entrance/exit protocols, etc. etc. These logistical pieces have already been thought through and are almost ready to roll out in large part.

The Church building will receive a thorough deep-cleaning before reopening, and we are continuing to work on sourcing and securing the necessary supplies for ongoing sanitizing and cleaning of the space. It is already apparent that our major obstacles will lie in two significant challenges. While we have sourced supplies and resources, actual **procurement** is made complicated given the fact that the whole world is also looking to procure these same supplies and resources. Some resources have been on backorder for weeks already. Some of our supplies won't be available until August at the earliest, and so we have made contingency plans for interim measures. However, I am resolved that safety will not be compromised.

The second great challenge will lie in finding and properly training an adequate number of **volunteers** for what will be an initially people-intensive reopening. Many of our regular volunteers are considered "at risk" or "vulnerable", either because of age or underlying health issues. The availability and number of mass times will be determined primarily by the availability and number of volunteers to make our public celebrations possible.

At this point, I want to **reassure** everyone that we will be continuing to make our virtual participation in the mass available using the ZOOM platform. **We will not stop streaming our liturgies anytime soon.** The Archbishop has extended the dispensation for the "Sunday obligation" for an indefinite time to facilitate all of our people for whom returning to the physical space of the Church is difficult at this time.

To facilitate some aspects of our planning, I am inviting you to participate in a poll design for our parish that will help us anticipate some of the work we will need to



undertake to make the reopening of the buildings as smooth an experience as possible for as many as possible. The initial questions are generic, and so some of them may sound a little odd. The final questions are specific to Lourdes. In all, it shouldn't take more than 10 minutes to complete, and I thank you in advance for your helping in this way.

To **participate in the survey** using your computer, please follow the link provided.

[OLL Assessment/Survey](#)

Alternatively, text **ANEJ** to **90888** to start the assessment. (Network rates may apply)

With all the planning that needs to be undertaken, it is highly unlikely that we will be in a position to reopen our Church building for Eucharistic celebrations by June 3rd or June 7th, the dates identified by the Archdiocese for the "absolute earliest" reopening. In light of the flood of anticipation publishing these dates has engendered, I am reluctant to name a specific date for our reopening here at Lourdes. But I will promise you two things: First, when we reopen, we will do so safely and with everyone's health and well-being in mind. Secondly, we will open as soon as practically possible upon securing the necessary resources - human and otherwise - to satisfy the guidance received from the Archdiocese and from civil authorities.

I fully expect to be in a position to submit our reopening plan for approval in the coming week, and from there I will keep you all fully updated both in email and on our parish website.

Have a fabulous Pentecost, and I hope to wave at you during our Food Drive.

Fr. David

SEE notes below

Remote Office Hours

Staff continue to work remotely this week. Anyone calling during regular office hours is likely to receive a call-back pretty quickly. Email inquiries continue to be addressed promptly: parishcenter at ollnr.org

Emergency calls: During office hours (Mon-Fri, 8:30am-6pm), call the parish at (818) 349-1500 and your call will be returned quickly. Outside those hours, in the case of imminent death, select option "0" to be connected to the priest "on duty".

Worship Schedule @ Lourdes

Monday through Saturday	Mass @ 8:30am
Sunday	Mass @ 8:30am & 10:30am
Celebrations of the Holy Mass can be accessed by clicking https://zoom.us/j/806182515?pwd=cUhsZHpDTjRoNkdsSThFWnBEZXozdz09 Meeting ID: 806 182 515 Password: 002497 When joining the ZOOM meeting, please mute your microphones and turn off your cameras . The "Church" will be opened 10 minutes before the service begins. If you log in earlier, you will be placed in a "waiting room."	
Domingo (En Español)	Missa @ 1:30pm
Santa Misa en español https://zoom.us/j/450000400?pwd=dIY0WTN0R1pZMU0raFh20TNrdmxsdz09 Meeting ID: 450 000 400 Password: 018715	
Divine Mercy Chaplet (daily at 3pm) https://us04web.zoom.us/j/905598741?pwd=cHc3UIVULzE1VHhyWVFQTIBrV3I5Zz09 Meeting ID: 905 598 741 Password: 008708	
Sunday Night Prayer & Benediction - 8:30pm Our May Night Prayer and Benediction for the night of May 31st will be posted online.	
Additional masses are celebrated and live-streamed across the Archdiocese of Los Angeles http://www.olacathedral.org/live/ or https://lacatholics.org/mass-for-the-homebound/	