



# Our Lady of Lourdes

Embracing God's People • Equipping Disciples • Accompanying Believers

September 19, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I was just settling into the last wakeful moments of my day yesterday, when my cat, Zacchaeus jumped up, and there was a jolt. Initially I didn't know what had happened, as I was beginning to doze, but sure enough, there was a 4.5 quake that reached out to touch us, epicentered about 40 miles away at El Monte, it seems. So let's chalk that one down... plague, pestilence, fires, earthquake... if anyone sees a swarm of locusts headed our way, let me know! Just another experience to add to the annals of 2020!

This past week has been a busy one in our parish community. As I mentioned in recent letters, we celebrated a "week with Jesus", beginning on Monday last, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross) we held four celebrations during which young people of our parish community received Eucharist for the first time. It had a touch of the 'bizarre' about it, given that the celebrations all took place outdoors, but it was a great joy to see our young people take this momentous step in their journey of faith as part of our parish community. I thanked the parents of our young people for their commitment to the promises they made when they originally brought their children for baptism, and I only wish that more of our community could have been present to witness the joy and the simple faith which has been handed on to our boys and girls. It's such a significant moment in the life of a parish community, but one that has been necessarily tempered by our COVID realities.



Fr. Fili shares his homily at First Communion on Friday

By way of an aside, I want to single out for my gratitude the volunteers and staff who worked behind the scenes to make these celebrations possible. All the work that Mrs. Glaspy and Sr. Frances undertook, supported by their fellow teachers and catechists, was supplemented by the men and women of our parish community who came out each evening to facilitate our celebrations, giving of themselves and their time, allowing our first communion families the opportunity to celebrate as we did. Kudos to all our volunteers.

**This evening** will see us celebrate the final steps of our RCIA participants prior to their Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist next weekend. On the patio of our Church this evening, we will gather with our elect, our candidates and their sponsor and god-parents. By the time these words are being read, our "**scrutiny**" and presentation of the Creed and the 'Our Father' will have taken place.

All of this is an affirmation of God’s faithfulness and ongoing blessing within the life of our parish community. In a time when it is so easy to think only on what we are missing, the beauty of God’s grace is being revealed in all these journeys of faith that enrich not only the lives of those undertaking the journey, but also the broader life of our community of faith. To God be praise and thanks for all these blessings!

**San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission**

Since its opening in 2015, following a devastating fire which destroyed the original shelter in North Hollywood in 2014, Our Lady of Lourdes has supported this local homeless shelter in its incredible work in the community.

**We are hosting a Drive-by / Drop-off**, to support a great community partner that is the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. The drive-by / drop-off will take place on **NEXT SUNDAY, September 27th at Stroup Hall between 10am and 12noon**. Cars will enter the lot from Kinzie Street beside Stroup Hall and exit onto Superior Street.

<p><b>URGENT NEEDS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Full Size Body Lotion</li> <li>● Diapers - Sizes 2 and 6</li> <li>● Pull Ups – Sizes 3-6T</li> <li>● Baby Wipes</li> <li>● Lysol/Clorox Wipes</li> <li>● Women’s Shaving Cream</li> </ul> <p><b>MOBILE SHOWER ITEMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Men’s &amp; Women’s Underwear and T-Shirts in Sizes M to 2X, Size L most needed</li> <li>● Full Size Thin White Towels</li> </ul> <p><b>COVID-19 NEEDS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hand Sanitizer</li> <li>● Alcohol Prep Wipes</li> <li>● Disinfectant Spray</li> <li>● Emergen-C / Airborne</li> </ul>	<p><b>SHELTER ITEMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shampoo &amp; Conditioner</li> <li>● Razors</li> <li>● Kids’ Toothpaste</li> <li>● Cleansing Wipes</li> <li>● Sunscreen</li> </ul> <p><b>KITCHEN ITEMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Breakfast/Granola Bars</li> <li>● Bread &amp; Bagels</li> <li>● Individual Packs of Chips, Cookies &amp; Crackers</li> <li>● Coffee Creamer</li> <li>● Tea/Green Tea</li> <li>● Granulated White Sugar</li> </ul>
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**High Holy Days**

Yesterday evening at sundown marked the beginning of the Jewish New Year, 5781, I believe. The New Year holiday, Rosh Hashanah, is usually marked by observant Jews going to synagogue and participating in religious ceremonies. The following days, up until Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonement - are used to prepare for this holiest of Jewish holidays. Although not completely familiar with the rituals and significance of the Day of Atonement, I understand that it is a day on which people celebrate the reality of God’s forgiveness in the face of human repentance, giving way to a year of life, health and happiness.

I bring all of this to your attention in order to commend to your prayers our Jewish brothers and sisters, who would ordinarily gather together for these great days, but who in this year of 2020

find themselves unable to do so as they normally would. We ourselves shared something of this experience in March and April when our Lent and our Easter were so impacted that it tore at our hearts. I invite you to join with our Jewish families in prayerful solidarity for their loss, and in hope-filled anticipation of a better year ahead.

### **Outdoor Liturgies Continue - Streaming Liturgies Enhanced**

Last weekend someone commented to me that they weren't sure if it would be better for our health indoors or outdoors, between COVID-19 and the smoke in the air. I agreed with them, and without intending anything other than a simple observation, I demurred that remaining at home was probably the better of the options, difficult though that was for me to say.

Once again, I remind everyone that Archbishop Gomez has offered - and continues to offer - a dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Eucharist. As we have done from when our church was initially closed in March, we continue to use the Zoom platform to stream our masses. Preparations are already well underway to transition from the zoom platform to a native live streaming platform. In the coming weeks we will be sharing information about this, and we continue to hope for a seamless transition to a more robust platform. You can preview the new platform by pointing a web browser to <https://vimeo.com/ollnr>

We are committed to streaming our **Sunday Mass at 9am, 11am and 1pm** (Spanish) for the foreseeable future.

As of today, the following arrangements are in place for the public celebration of sacrament here are Lourdes:

**Sunday morning** outdoor mass continues to be celebrated at **8:00am**. It's a little rough and ready, but continues to work well. Participants are happily making themselves comfortable with the chairs and/or blankets they bring, and we're getting along with wearing our masks and maintaining at least 6' of social distance. Protocols for our outdoor mass were outlined in an earlier email, and can still be found on our [parish website](#).

**ONCE AGAIN THIS WEEKEND**, *I would invite people to be particularly discerning about being physically present for mass in light of the very unhealthy air quality we are experiencing because of smoke pollution from ongoing fires.*

**Weekday Mass** continues to be celebrated on the **church patio** at **6:30am**, Monday through Friday. This mass is proving a blessing for those whose work commitments don't allow for being present at later times. This is supplemented with a **streamed liturgy** at **8:30am**.

### **Infant Baptism Outdoors**

Anyone wishing to plan or schedule an infant baptism is invited to reach out to Anne Wing [awing@ollnr.org](mailto:awing@ollnr.org), and she will be happy to assist in your planning.

### **Marriage Rites on the Patio**

Anyone wishing to plan or schedule marriage is also invited to reach out to Anne Wing [awing@ollnr.org](mailto:awing@ollnr.org), and she will be happy to assist in your planning. There are online preparation opportunities available, and we are happy and able to assist in gathering and completing the appropriate paperwork.

### **Funeral Rites on the Patio**

We now have the opportunity for those who wish, to celebrate a simple funeral service on the Church patio. Arrangements can be made by contacting the parish office.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation** or **Confession** now take place outdoors and at a mutually convenient time, and throughout the week. To avail of this opportunity, please email [parishcenter@ollnr.org](mailto:parishcenter@ollnr.org) or call (818) 349-1500.

### **Celebrating the Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila - Save the Date**

Once again a reminder to those who wish to celebrate the Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz that this year there will be a Regional Celebration of the Feastday on **September 26th at 11am**, with a [livestreamed mass](#) presided over by **Bishop Alex Aclan**.

I invite you to **remember and hold in prayer** the adults among us who have been preparing for sacrament and for formally joining our Church:

Those preparing for full initiation (i.e. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) include:  
**Rose Navas, Seth Ortiz, Justin Parry, Sauluma Rios, & Dustin Robinson**

These are joined by those preparing for completion of sacraments (Confirmation and Eucharist):  
**Matthew Budde, Michael Budde & Judith Ntere.**

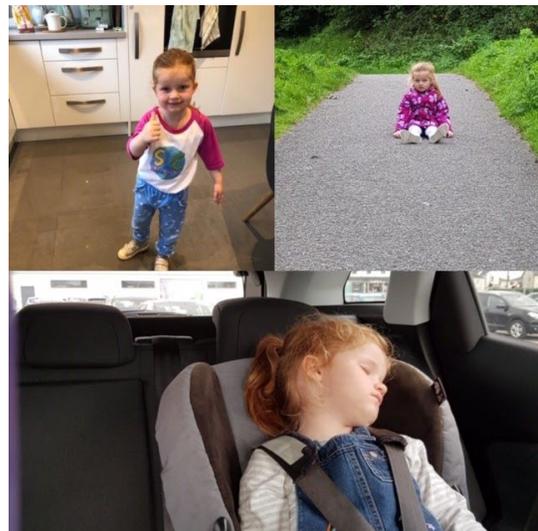
**Liturgy & Rites of Full Initiation** (Adult Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist) is scheduled for the evening of Saturday, **September 26th** on the Church Patio at 5:30pm.

### **Sacrament of Confirmation**

On Sunday evening, **September 27th, at 5:30pm**, Bishop Wilkerson will visit our parish to preside over a celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation for the youth and adults of our parish community, who have prepared themselves and who have been waiting for this day, ever so patiently. Our candidates for Confirmation, too, I commend to your prayers.

### **The Further Adventures of Mollie Loftus**

My sisters, Niamh and Aoife, spontaneously decided to travel the three hours by car to visit with Mollie this weekend. I awoke this morning to a collection of pics and videos that were shared while I slept. There was a lot of activity as the three headed off for a big breakfast of pancakes (Mollie's favorite breakfast food). It seems that they had to get up early to be at the restaurant before it got too crowded. Following breakfast, they went for a big walk to get in some exercise after all the pancakes. There were swings and see-saws to be visited during their outing, and all manner of fun to be had in the park. But there came a point in the mid-afternoon when Mollie began to grow a little weary. Soon after there came another point, when my little niece simply decided to call it quits and as my sisters didn't take her hints to



carry her, Mollie assumed the position and plonked herself down on the footpath, refusing to go any farther. I suspect there might have been a few tears, and no small effort to manipulate her aunties into carrying her, and my sisters are refusing to comment on the matter (which suggests they may have caved to their niece). In any event, Mollie made it back to the parking-lot, and a few minutes after beginning the journey home, nodded off to sleep in her car seat in the back of the car, with not a care in the world on her.

I began this letter with a tongue-in-cheek reference to the craziness that has visited us in our lives in this *annus horribilis* (horrible year) of 2020. Plague, pestilence, fires, civil disruptions and riots, floods, storms, earthquakes (and mosquitos, if not locusts) just keep on coming... We all have our plans and our hopes for the time that is given to us. COVID-19 has, in large part, wreaked havoc on our aspirations for this year. Significant human and faith rituals have been missed. Graduations have taken place without the usual pomp and circumstance. Weddings have been postponed. Funerals have taken place without appropriate opportunities to gather and mourn. Babies have been born. Children have moved back in. Children have moved out. Jobs have been lost. Employment has been secured. College has been deferred. Courses have begun.

We might well understand if someone just wanted to call it quits, plonk themselves down, pull a blanket over their heads, and not re-emerge until after the New Year.

We might appreciate the feeling. We might even share the feeling, sometimes. However, this is not our way. We are the disciples of the One who refused to remain captive in the grave, and who walked free from the tomb, leaving it empty behind Him. We are not cowed by the challenges that confront us, nor by any sense of weariness that visits with us for a while. If we need to, we take a nap. (Sometimes the whole world looks a lot better after a nap.) We reset ourselves. We reorient our perspective. We remind ourselves, along with the psalmist:

“The LORD is just in all his ways and holy in all his works.

The LORD is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth.”

(Ps 145)

And so, on that note, friends, God bless and keep you and all those dear to you.

Onward!

*Fr. David*