



Embracing God's People • Equipping Disciples • Accompanying Believers

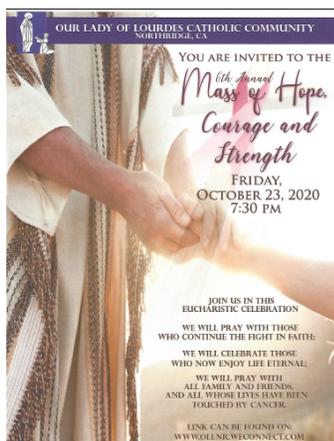
October 10, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Since I began these emails seven months ago, I have heard from many recipients. One response included some epithets not to be repeated, from someone who wanted nothing more to do with our parish. This past week I received a note from someone in which they wrote: *"Please don't stop writing!!! I look forward every weekend to hear from you and it makes me feel connected to OLL."* These two responses probably represent the point of maximum divergence among those who read this note. Most of the feedback I receive is generally positive, sometimes with encouragement to do something different, but almost always appreciative of the efforts of both myself and of parish staff.

I realise in writing these emails that for some in our community they have become something of a "lifeline", a way of keeping in touch with a community and a world that otherwise might seem to pass us by in this time so marked by COVID-19. It is in the nature of this weekly email that there are items of information that people enjoy, some items that they skip over, and others that they simply have no interest in. For myself, trying to maintain some sense of transparency with respect to how we as a community of faith are navigating our COVID-times, is of value. I endeavor to keep these emails somewhat personal, or folksy, in that I share my thoughts and concerns as though in a conversation. At the same time, I want to respect your email inbox, and the demands made on your time and attention. With this in mind you'll notice in coming weeks that I'll be trying some slightly different approaches in my efforts to communicate in this medium.

One of the adjustments going forward will be an inclusion of a link to basic information about the ongoing and repeating events around the parish, rather than writing them up in the body of this email every week. Let me know [what you think](#).



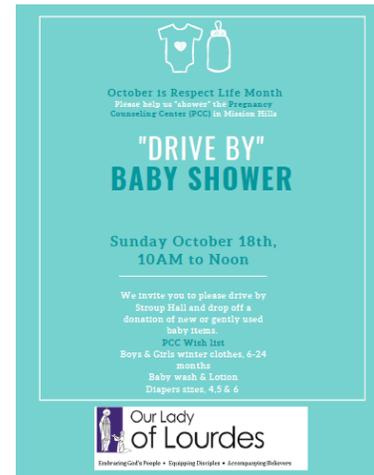
The Sixth Annual “Mass of Hope, Courage & Strength” is scheduled to take place on the evening of **Friday, October 23rd at 7:30pm** in the parish church, and will be **presided over by Bishop Gerald E. Wilkerson**. For obvious reasons, we won't be gathering physically in the space, however the mass will be live-streamed and available for everyone to view.

In anticipation of this evening of prayer, we are inviting anyone who wishes to share the names of loved ones or friends for whom you would like us to pray. An [electronic form](#) is available to submit names to be included during our service.

As is our tradition, during this mass we will pray in faith with those who continue their struggle with cancer, we will commemorate and celebrate the lives of those who have gone before us in faith, and we will express our solidarity in prayer with all family, friends and all whose lives are touched by cancer. More information may be found on the [parish website](#), where you can [download a flyer](#) to share with others, and you can [enroll someone](#) for whom we can pray.

In the United States October marks **Respect Life Month**. On Sunday morning, **October 18th**, as part of our Respect Life promotion traditionally held during the month of October, Our Lady of Lourdes is hosting a “**Drive-By Baby Shower**”, to benefit the **Pregnancy Counselling Center**.

From **10am to 12noon** you are invited to drive by **Stroup Hall** to donate new or gently used baby items, such as Boys & Girls winter clothes (6-24 months), Baby wash & Lotion and Diapers (sizes, 4,5 & 6). Any funds dropped off should be in an envelope marked “Drive-By Baby Shower”, and everything collected will be delivered to the Pregnancy Counselling Center, whose partnership we continue to value and esteem.



Our Lady of Lourdes, Northridge

GOAL: \$125,656.00

PLEGGED: \$117,977.00

PAID: \$103,787.38

Our annual [Together in Mission](#) appeal began last February, just as word was breaking into our consciousness about a new, or “novel” virus we were calling the “Coronavirus”. We didn’t have the opportunity to follow-up on our appeal or to make a report to you about our progress towards our goal, and I thought you’d like an update.

These numbers are current as of September 16th, and I want to thank and celebrate all who have both pledged and made payments. In these days, Together in Mission is more essential than ever before, and the commitment of the parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes instills within me a pride and a joy for the goodness and generosity embodied by our following through with our pledges.

I know and appreciate that the challenges we have been meeting head on in our homes and in our families have ranged from the frustrating to the overwhelming. But I know too of the graces and blessings people have shared. And through all of this, those who have participated in our annual Together in Mission appeal have risen above their own immediate concerns and shared an open heart of compassion and generosity with those who are in even more dire situations across the poorest parish communities of our local Church. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

To make a contribution, please navigate to [ourmissionla.org](#), and don’t forget to note “Our Lady of Lourdes, Northridge (339)” as your parish from the dropdown menu . God bless you in your goodness.

Congratulations to New Deacons



Sergio Hidalgo is ordained Deacon by Bishop Alex Aclan



Francis Kim is ordained Deacon by Bishop Alex Aclan

Earlier today at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, Bishop Alex Aclan ordained eight men as transitional deacons. Two of those men, **Sergio Hidalgo** and **Francis Kim** returned to St. John's Seminary to complete their preparation for ordination following their internship among us, here at Lourdes.

In these pictures we see the laying on of hands (which is the act of ordination), the promise of obedience (the one to be ordained places his hands between the hands of the bishop) and the receiving of the Book of the Gospels ("Receive the gospel of Christ whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe and practice what you teach.")

Francis and Sergio will now continue their preparations to be ordained priests next Summer.

Notes of congratulation can be mailed to them at: St. John's Seminary, 5012 Seminary Rd Camarillo, CA 93012.



On Monday morning next, **Msgr. Peter** will be undergoing hip-replacement surgery, and I ask your prayers both for himself and for his surgical team.

He will be going through a few weeks of rehab while recovering at home, and so you likely won't see him on livestream or taking his usual walk in the yard or around the block.

I don't mind sharing the "family secret" that Msgr. Peter is not exactly known for being the world's best patient, and so he'll appreciate your prayers for his swift recovery. (Those of us trying to help Msgr. Peter through this time will also appreciate your prayers!!!)

The Church and Politics

I've been receiving calls and emails from different people asking why the Church hasn't spoken out about various election-related matters, and I love to remind everyone that the Church takes very seriously the imperative of conscience that is proper to every citizen. Every four years the US Bishops prepare a document to assist the faithful in discerning an informed choice at the ballot box. While it is published a full year before an election to avoid partisanship, the nuances of the bishops' efforts are usually ignored until right before an election. By then, everyone is often caught up in a frenzy that makes the exercise of reason and conscience formation difficult.

Nonetheless, I refer everyone to the US Bishops Website which has a multitude of [resources](#) to empower people to make informed decisions in their political life. You can also [download a PDF](#) of the Bishops document entitled ***Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship***.

The Church's teaching on our role in civil society in general is found in that section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church related to the Fourth Commandment ([CCC 2234-2246](#)). While the language of the teaching may seem formal, the insights and wisdom of the teaching is appreciable. The Catechism makes quite clear that we have responsibilities as citizens that are not ours to avoid:

"It is the *duty of citizens* to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. The love and service of *one's country* follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity. Submission to legitimate authorities and service of the common good require citizens to fulfill their roles in the life of the political community." (2239).

"Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one's country" (2240)

As a citizen, I encourage fellow citizens to participate in the voting process. As a pastor, I pray for everyone who is struggling to make a conscientious decision, as well as for those women and men who commit themselves to public service.

The Further Adventures of Mollie Loftus

I've continued to reflect on the thoughts that began to find expression in my mind as I wrote last week's installment of Mollie's day-to-day adventures. The thoughts occasioned by my Dad teaching Mollie how to plant seeds and to work soil was supplemented with some other images this week, showing Mollie baking with my mother, her grandmother.

Once again - while missing family and home - I am reminded of the wonderful beauty that is involved in passing on family treasures from one generation to the next. My grandmother taught my mother how to bake. And looking at this picture reminds me of the days my mother actually taught me how to do some baking - cakes, tarts, scones, etc. These images



show another generation in the family learning the craft (along with Mollie discharging one of her primary responsibilities in the family - that of being a big sister).

The smell of freshly-baked bread in a kitchen is one of my greatest delights in life, I confess. And I just *love* a crusty bread. I know that today there are all manner of tools and machines that can help us, and that we can even make bread “out of a box”. But there’s something about baking a loaf of bread from scratch, not with any written recipe or with time delegated to a machine, that makes it particularly and wonderfully satisfying. There are some realities that can’t be mimicked, there are some efforts that are simply required.

It’s not unlike that with the sharing of faith and the passing of faith from one generation to another. I have a sense that some of our struggles with faith and worship in these COVID-days derive from a weakness in how the Church has conducted itself in recent decades.

As societal changes progressed and the experience of domestic church came to be less of a focus in our families, we sent our children to CCD or to RE “classes”, or we sent them to Catholic School, and we hoped that while there, our children would learn what they needed to learn in order to make their first communion, or confirmation, or whatever. The Church promoted and facilitated this approach. Catechists were trained, and teachers taught. Everything went along just fine... or so it seemed. However, if we choose to confuse religion with faith, or imagine that a class can teach belief, we may find ourselves at a loss when it comes to growing and developing an actual relationship with the person of Jesus. Perhaps it’s a case of both parents sharing and modeling faith at home and faith shared and modeled at school? Perhaps we are invited in these days to consider how well we ourselves witness to our relationship with Jesus? The foundational underpinnings of faith in our lives are grounded in our family/at-home experience. That lived faith, prayer-life, and discipleship of Jesus learned and experienced at home, can be supported and affirmed with Religious Education and Catholic schooling, but cannot be replaced by any formal effort of parish or church.

Faith is both a gift of God as well as our response in the living of our lives for that gift. Belief is a rational proposition, and it calls for a turning of our lives and our hearts towards God in Christ, over and over again in the constant movement of conversion. While COVID-19 and its impact on how we live our faith has laid bare some of the weaknesses in our faith lives, I also see the finger of God at work in it, inviting us to a renewed reflection and commitment to the ‘domestic church’. I’m not suggesting a return, necessarily, to the church of my childhood when we all habitually prayed the Angelus at noon and again at 6pm, or when we got on our knees at 8pm to pray the rosary. Perhaps this is a good time for us to recover some of what is good in our cultural devotions, or experiences of prayer as family together, and to commit to one another to pray with and for each other and for our fellow parishioners? Sharing our experiences of encounters with Jesus in our lives can be powerful moments of transformation for our families, and indeed for ourselves. And what is good for our domestic families is good for our parish family.

Passing on the family secrets for the craft of baking bread is not at all unlike the mentoring and discipling of our family members in the faith. It’s not going to be the same every time and in every situation, but it offers the hope of a satisfaction that you just can’t get any other way.

And so, on that note, friends, God bless and keep you and your loved ones always in His care.

Fr. David