



Embracing God's People • Equipping Disciples • Accompanying Believers

October 17, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This past week brought me to realize that I, as with so many of you, have days and lingering moments of utter frustration in having to live with the consequences of COVID-19. I don't mind sharing that I weary of taking precautions to look out for the health of others. I have moments when I forget to put on my mask before stepping out of the house, and I have to go back and get it. I notice in myself a certain "laxity" growing within, that allows me to ignore some basic practices such as washing my hands, maintaining the appropriate social distance, etc. My weariness is compounded by the trending news from across the country that there seems to be an uptick in infections, and even here in LA County the recent progress seems to be stalled.

The truth is that I have been harboring a hope that we would be able to resume indoor worship sooner rather than later. I am tempering my hope a little, but I am not letting it go. As an expression of my hope and my efforts to ensure as safe a resumption of indoor mass as is reasonably possible, I am resolved to double-down on my efforts to do better in terms of my own personal behaviors. I will also be encouraging all of us to a similar intentionality that better serves the health and well-being of our fellow parishioners whenever we gather.

So in the coming weeks, I encourage you to plan on bringing your best as an expression of care for those around you with whom you gather for worship. Understanding how the virus works is important. We all know that there are tremendous efforts underway to develop a vaccine, but we are some time away from that being realized. We've also learned that COVID-19 seems to spread mainly from person to person. With this in mind, we endeavor to minimize as much as is reasonably possible the chances of our spreading the virus, whether we show symptoms or not. To that end:

- Wash hands frequently (Sanitize on-site)
- Ensure your mask is properly in place covering nose and mouth (minimizes our droplet spread).
- Repeatedly engage in symptoms checks
- Maintain a minimum of 6' of distance between individual households.
- Pre-register for 8am Sunday Mass (make it easy to be contacted in the event of an outbreak associated with Church)

In this moment in time we are challenged to rise above our individual frustrations and weariness, and to put the good and well-being of the whole community first. In our care and consideration for others, I believe that we can rise to the occasion, and overcome our acedia*

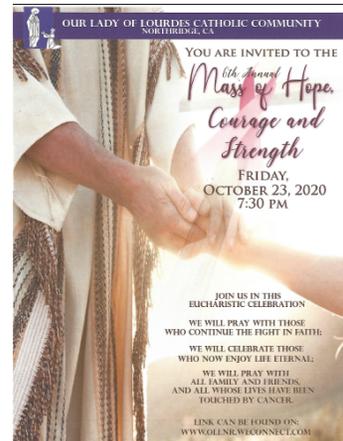
(* just for the dictionary-lovers among us).



This Sunday, 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.

The Sixth Annual “Mass of Hope, Courage & Strength” is scheduled to take place next **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.

All Souls Novena

November is traditionally known as the Month of the Holy Souls in our Church, and every year we celebrate a novena of (9) masses for the repose of the souls of our beloved dead. In the past, we have made memorial cards/envelopes available in the Church, and people have been able to take them home, fill in the names of loved ones and return it in an envelope with a donation. This year, we have adapted the process to observe the necessary care in light of our COVID-19 realities.

The novena begins on Monday, November 2nd. To [enroll a loved one in the novena](#), you can share their names, and their names will be recorded and printed out, and placed on the altar for every mass of the novena.

Annual Mass of Remembrance/Dia de los Muertos

Our annual remembrance of those who have gone before us in faith will take place on Monday, November 2, 7:00 p.m. (Livestream) We have created a [form](#) to allow you to [submit the names of loved ones who have passed away](#) in the past 12 months (October 2019 through October 2020). Also, those wishing to share a photograph to be included in our “digital ofrenda”, or memorial, may send pictures to Anne awing@ollnr.org Names and pictures will be shared in the livestream during the Mass.

Update on Msgr. Peter



Last Monday morning **Msgr. Peter** underwent a very successful hip-replacement procedure. He's since been recovering, very well, and has expressed his gratitude for the care and concern so many have expressed through the parish office.

He will be going through a few weeks of rehab while recovering at home, and so as I mentioned last week, you won't see him on livestream immediately, or taking his usual walks in the neighborhood.

My worries about him not being a good patient were unfounded. He really is a remarkable character, and he's greatly looking forward to getting back on his feet, hitting the golf-course, and resuming his mass schedule.



Our Lady of Lourdes, Northridge

GOAL: \$125,656.00

PLEDGED: \$117,977.00

PAID: \$103,787.38

Following our report last weekend on our progress with the annual appeal, **Together in Mission**, a number of you reached out to thank me for the reminder, and for bringing this great cause back on our collective parish radar.

I want to take a moment to thank those who have made good on their pledges and who continue to do so. I also want to thank those who reached out to make a donation in light of the report made last week.

These numbers are the ones I shared last week, and I re-share them as a point of reference.

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, and return it to you many times over.

Updated Parish Guidance from Archdiocese

On Friday evening, we received [updated guidance](#) (opens PDF document) from the Archdiocese regarding parish pastoral and liturgical practices. It was developed to correspond to the tiered system of COVID-19 responses now employed by the State and local authorities.

As you know, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is comprised of Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. Each county has its own protocols according to the local situation with respect to COVID-19 infections and spread. Consequently, a church building in Simi (Ventura Co.) may be open while a church building over the hill in Chatsworth (LA Co.) remains closed.

Here at Lourdes, in keeping with the newly received guidance from the Archdiocese, and the always-unfolding protocols of the country health offices, we will be developing revised protocols for the corresponding tiers. As part of that forward planning, we will be developing plans for mass schedules which best meet the needs of our community as we adapt to the “tiered” system.

In next week’s email, we will include a link to a survey which will facilitate your participation in this planning process. Make sure to read next weekend’s email, and avail of the opportunity to shape our next steps as a community.

The Further Adventures of Mollie Loftus

I got to FaceTime with my niece this week, and was rewarded with a delightful squeal of “It’s Uncle David!” as my image appeared on the screen in front of Mollie. In that single moment, she slayed my heart! I can’t remember becoming such an easy mark. (It seems COVID has weakened me!)

It’s been a pretty busy few days for Mollie. Yesterday we enjoyed a video chat, but later that evening our whole family “gathered” on zoom. It coincided with Mollie’s bed-time, but she got to greet us all, act out a little, and then she had to go to bed. Before going to bed, her Dad reminded her that she had to get ready to write her letter to Santa, and that deed was undertaken just this morning. Later, in the afternoon, she got to go on a hike (which somehow necessitated a change of socks as soon as they got back to the car).



I suspect that the reason for the immediate change was some minor misbehavior while hiking, perhaps involving some “accidental” splashing in puddles of water that her boots weren’t designed to handle. It was the kind of behavior to which she “kind of” referred in her letter to Santa when she wrote: “I have tried to be a very good girl and do what my Mummy and Daddy ask, but sometimes I don’t always listen. I am sorry when that happens though...”

The old adage tells us that “confession is good for the soul”. Throughout our history as a community of believers, men and women of profound faith have found that openly naming the wrong we do provides us with no small relief from its negative effects in our lives. A recent dissertation on the spirituality of St. Theresa of Avila was entitled “Your Word Pierced My Heart, and I Fell in Love.” This was a response to St. Theresa’s reading of another’s “Confessions”, those of St. Augustine, in which she recognized her own story, and found her own freedom.

It's not usually easy for us to admit that we're wrong, or to say "I'm sorry". Yet when we do, we often find ourselves experiencing some relief, a sense of recovered goodness or freedom, a release from the prison which our failing to be all we can be has created for us.

In our relationships with one another, and in our general interactions in our world, taking the time to intentionally reflect on our lives and our conduct, examining the good that we have done as well as the bad, and even naming the good we have chosen not to do, improves our self-understanding, and potentially offers paths to richer, more fulfilled lives in relationship with others.

I often remember the opening scenes of the 1980's period movie, "The Mission", in which the character played by Robert DiNiro carries the full weight of his weaponry and armor through steep jungle terrain as penance for having murdered an innocent man. His companions want to cut loose the burden, but he is adamant on seeing his penance through to the end. Only by expressing his sorrow and his responsibility does the character open himself up for redemption and renewal.

I think it might certainly be considered counter-cultural today for people to take responsibility for their own lives, or for their part in or contribution to wounded situations and painful experiences. Without naming the realities of our lives appropriately, it can be next to impossible to even approach the full potential of our being.

Mollie is already figuring out that by honestly naming some shadowy truths in her little life, the benefit on Christmas morning might be magnified. Imagine how we can benefit from a little reflection and honest self-examination for ourselves! Just imagine the gifts God has in store for us in our own lives!

And so, dear friends, God bless and keep you and your loved ones, today and always.

Fr. David