



Embracing God's People • Equipping Disciples • Accompanying Believers

October 24, 2020

Brothers and Sisters,

I shared last weekend that we received [revised guidance](#) (opens PDF document) from the Archdiocese to assist us in the planning and execution of local parish pastoral and liturgical practices. The guidance was developed to correspond to the tiered system of COVID-19 responses now employed by State and local authorities. That the Archdiocese is comprised of three distinct counties, each with their own jurisdictions and protocols, makes for a situation in which 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, work has begun to develop our local protocols in keeping with the newly received guidance from the Archdiocese. Part of this work includes developing plans for mass schedules which best meet the needs of our community as we adapt to the “tiered” system.

With this in mind, I would like to invite your participation in a [survey](#) designed to help us best meet the needs of our community as it directly relates to **planning our mass schedule** for the next few months. Please consider giving a few minutes of your time to help us. As results come in, I will continue to keep everyone apprised in these weekly letters.

While my own hopes for a return to indoor worship seem to be deferred once again, nonetheless we are prepared for that eventuality, and should we get notice that LA County has moved into the “Red Tier”, I am confident we will be ready for indoor worship that same weekend.

Moving forward, and mindful that we are all weary of the by-now standard behaviors for public gatherings and interactions, it is a good thing to remember the basic steps we can all take to mitigate the spreading of COVID-19. Keep in mind that our efforts are about serving the health and well-being of our fellow parishioners whenever we gather.

All our efforts endeavor to minimize as much as is reasonably possible the chances of our spreading the virus to others, 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)

**Confessions** at Church continue to be “by appointment” while LA County remains in the “Purple Tier”. This works well for most, as the convenience of scheduling confessions on any given day of the week seems to be attractive. Those who are not parishioners, and those not receiving this email, find it less attractive, as the ability to just “drop in” isn’t available. When we return to the “Red Tier”, we will be able to return to the “drop-in” practice.



Last Sunday, October 18th, as part of our Respect Life promotion traditionally held during the month of October, Our Lady of Lourdes hosted a **“Drive-By Baby Shower”**, to benefit the **Pregnancy Counselling Center**.

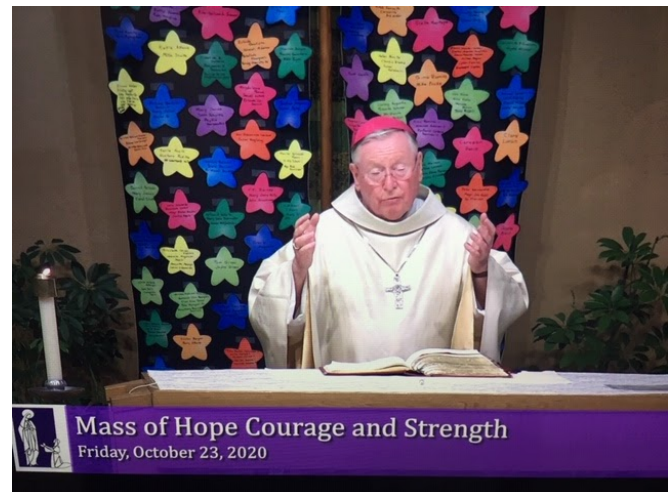
The collected items were delivered to their destination on Wednesday last, and warm thanks were offered, to be shared with the parish community.

Our gratitude goes out to all those who participated in the event, and especially to those who facilitated and made possible the event last Sunday.

**The Sixth Annual “Mass of Hope, Courage & Strength”** took place last night, Friday, October 23rd at 7:30pm in the parish church, and was presided over by Bishop Wikerson.

Our thanks to all those who shared the names of loved ones and friends whose lives have been touched by cancer. Their names were included on a banner placed in the sanctuary, and all were prayed for during the course of the liturgy.

If you didn’t get a chance to tune in to our Livestream of the liturgy, you can [watch it at leisure](#).



### **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.

To [enroll a loved one in the novena](#), which begins November 2nd, you can share their names, and their names will be recorded and printed out, and placed on the altar for the entire 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](mailto:awing@ollnr.org) Names and pictures will be shared in the livestream during the Mass. (A word of thanks to those who helped us find and fix a ‘glitch’ on the form last week)

### **Update on Msgr. Peter**

Msgr. Peter continues to recover well, and his strength and movement are returning. The healing process is one that takes time, and his patience some days is better than other days, as he would say himself. Having said that, his fitness and general good health have definitely helped him in his recovery process, such that he’s exceeding expectations. He continues to appreciate your thoughtful prayers and consideration.

### **Engaging Community**

So much of what we do at Church is about bringing people together in community, in communion with one another and with Jesus. Social distancing is all about maintaining distance one from another, which creates detachment and even isolation. To that end, we have employed a number of different approaches to community-building over these past months, in an effort to continue to **be Church**, even though our usual gathering space **at church** is not possible.

Our “drive-through/drop-offs” have allowed us to serve local causes and support our partners (e.g. MEND, the Rescue Mission Homeless Shelter, the Pregnancy Counselling Center, etc.) in **outreach**. Our Livestream platform allows us to broadcast our liturgies on our own website, helping to feed and sustain our **spiritual** lives. Our Parish School, RCIA, Religious Education and Confirmation/Youth programs have all pivoted to use technology to support and foster **faith formation** in a time when it is not possible to be physically present with one another. Bible Study, Tuesday Morning Coffee, Friday Night ZOOM, afford opportunities for people to **gather virtually**, and to maintain contact with one another. **Sacraments** continue to be celebrated, adapted for the circumstances of the moment. The **Parish Office** continues to be remotely operated, and staff are creative in meeting the needs of parishioners. All of this reminds me that we are indeed a blessed people who are intentional about our discipleship of Jesus.

### **Grief and Loss in Times of COVID**

On Thursday, Nov. 5, 2020, 7:00PM-8:15 PM, Dr. William Roozebook will lead a webinar sponsored by *Loyola Marymount University*. The description is as follows:

Although grief and loss are part of everyone’s life, the COVID-19 crisis has disrupted the ways people usually confront and integrate grief and loss. The purpose of this brief webinar is to explore those disruptions and to offer some ideas on how to grieve and help others grieve in the midst of the pandemic; special attention will be given to the role of the faith community during times of crisis.

Click on this link to RSVP: <https://lmu.wufoo.com/forms/s1mm6gn10c7mv94/>

### **Fratelli Tutti Reading Group**

In keeping with the above theme of engagement, we are preparing to launch a reading group in the coming weeks. The subject matter of the group will be the latest encyclical letter of Pope Francis, entitled “*Fratelli tutti*”. By way of preparing for the group, copies of the printed text can

be ordered online at the [USCCB website](#) or at other online booksellers. Alternatively, the document can be found online at the [Vatican Website](#), and a [PDF of the document](#) can be downloaded for free. Details about day/time will be finalized in the coming days and the group will be using the ZOOM platform to meet.

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

This past week was marked by some uncharacteristic quiet emanating from the home of Mollie Loftus. In some part this was attributable to Mollie having a pretty hectic social life these days. She's simply too busy to be spending too much time conversing with her aunts and uncles.

There was a costume party to which Mollie was invited, and of course dressing up as a princess seems somehow appropriate, I figure. One of the wonderful/challenging aspects of arriving at a costume party with others your own age, is that many little girls seem to enjoy dressing up as princesses. Just when you thought you were unique, that you were the only princess, deserving of all the adulation and attention of everyone around you, the behavior of others suggests an uncomfortable truth... that we are not always the center of the universe, our own or anyone else's... even though much of our lives might often be lived as though the contrary is the case.



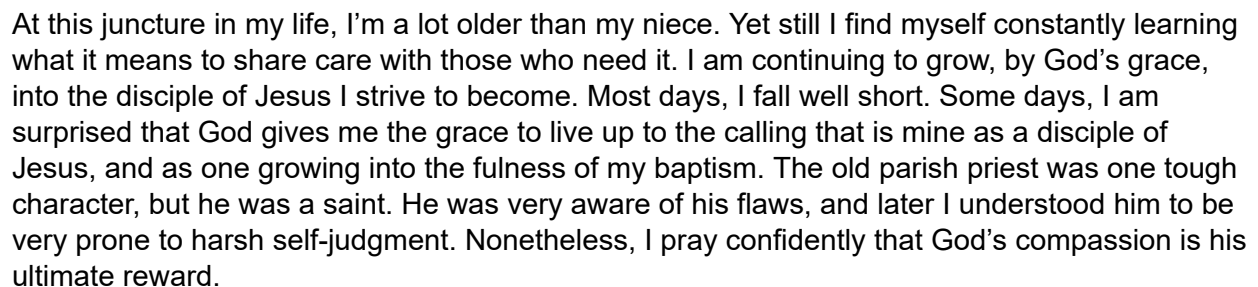
In one of the images in this collage, Mollie is actually kneeling by her bedside, enjoying some raisins. What's not apparent in the photo is that she's scoffing the raisins all on her own. It seems she brought them to her room to enjoy them in splendid isolation from everyone else. Those raisins are for the enjoyment of "me, myself, and I". I know that this was the occasion of another "lesson in life" on the part of her Mammy and Daddy. And if the lesson doesn't take straight away, let's just agree that this is a lesson that many of us continue to learn throughout our lives, way beyond three-and-a-half years old.

One of the life-lessons many of us learned in Kindergarten is that "sharing is caring." In the Catholic world, we have a strong tradition of care for the other. For Catholics, the evangelical virtues enunciated in Matthew 25 have been a constant aspiration throughout our history as a people of faith. Our care goes beyond the sharing of "things" and "stuff". Following in the footsteps of Jesus we find ourselves confronted time and time again, as the ages move through history, having to re-imagine and re-incarnate what it means to care as Jesus did.

Many years ago, when I was in my teens, I was privy to a situation about which I don't speak often. I had occasion to visit with the local parish priest, a man who had a reputation for a quick temper. As we chatted, the doorbell rang. He rose, excused himself to answer the doorbell, and left me alone in the sitting room, closing the door behind him. I couldn't make out what was going on in the hallway, but I heard some tearful talking, another door across the hall being opened, and then the phone in the hallway being used to make a call. The parish priest asked to speak to the father of the household. What I heard next was the raised voice of the parish priest loudly admonishing the man on the other end of the phone for kicking his young daughter out of



The old parish priest, cranky, angry and all-too-often intemperate in his own vulnerable humanity, reminds me of what it is to care for and look after others. He could have sat on his high moral horse, and added his voice to the condemnation of the young person, but he didn't. Others might have happily encouraged him to chastise the young person for her behavior, but he didn't. He looked beyond the judgment, with which many might be comfortable, and saw the vulnerable heart of a child of God in need of care and compassion. In that moment, I remember being awestruck by the generosity of his heart, a heart I had mis-judged as being hard and inconsiderate and had seen so often. He saw a child of God in need of love for Jesus.



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

*Fr. David*