



Embracing God's People • Equipping Disciples • Accompanying Believers

April 17, 2021

*Surrexit sicut dixit! He is Risen as he said!*

Brothers and Sisters,

This (Saturday) evening our post-Easter “season” kicks into high gear as we celebrate with our parish youth the Sacrament of Confirmation. Bishop Wilkerson will be the confirming prelate, and families, sponsors and friends of our confirmation candidates will be joining our young men and women in the celebration, to take place outdoors near the grotto by Moran Center. In all, 52 candidates are to be confirmed.

Tomorrow (Sunday) morning, we will begin to celebrate with another 52 of our younger parishioners who will be joining in the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time ever! Over the next three Sundays we will pray with our young people and their families, as together celebrate this wonderful occasion in the faith life of our parish community.

“Sacrament Season” in the Catholic Church can be a frenetic time in our parishes. With the adaptations necessitated by the COVID pandemic we have been living through, this sense of the hectic might seem to be magnified a little more than usual in our experience and in our awareness. The goodness and the generosity of spirit that is within each of us will be tapped, in order that we can engage with and support one another as best we possibly may.

For all that this is a time of sacramental chaos, I am delighted to be experiencing it. I know I’m a little odd in the way I see and understand our world, but I love the chaos that comes with “sacrament season.” It reminds me of our families of faith who have been working diligently and steadily toward these important moments in the lives of our people, in the lives of our families, and in the life of our collective parish community. It reminds me that God’s grace continues to well-up and overflow within and among the people of God here in Northridge.

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Forward this email to a friend who might enjoy it

When I see baptisms, I see the wonder of new life in our church. The celebration of Baptism at the Easter Vigil opens up our baptismal font which has not been utilized during Lent. Each year we have a rush of little ones for baptism, as their parents have patiently awaited the Easter Season and the resumption of infant baptisms. This year it will take us most of the Easter Season to baptize all those who are to be raised with faith, nurtured in that faith by their parents and godparents, their extended family and indeed our entire family of faith here at Lourdes.

When I see people receiving Eucharist for the first time, I see another generation of faith coming to know the reality of the Presence of Jesus in their lives. I see parents and children and grandparents and friends and acquaintances celebrating the faith that has been passed on to us by our progenitors. As the Eucharistic Prayer articulates it, each time we do this “we show forth the paschal sacrifice of Christ that has been handed on to us.”

Confirmation is an occasion in which I find myself moved, always, as I watch the faces of young men and women in our community of faith affirm for themselves the promises once made on their behalf by their parents at their baptism. These promises were made without their understanding or assent, often years before, and now they stand among their own family of faith, and make their own profession of faith. I am moved to prayer for them all, knowing full well that the promise and potential embodied by those being confirmed will at times be tested and challenged in the years ahead. I pray that they will remember that there is at least this community of believers who love them, who care for them, and who will always be here for them, no matter where the world takes them and no matter the challenges with which the world confronts them. As they stand before us and among us to confirm their faith, I pray they will always know our community to be one of welcome and care, whenever they turn to us in the years ahead.

So yes, it's a crazy time of the year in the life of any parish community, but it is a time of life being celebrated, of love expressed, and of God's grace overflowing. The “crazy” is a small price to pay for such goodness in the life of our family of faith.

### **Mind the Gap**

There is an expression to be heard by travelers using trains in Ireland. It is an expression of care and caution as passengers alight from the train onto the platform. To “mind” something, is to pay attention to, to be attentive to the moment. The “gap” refers to the space that exists between the train and the station platform. The words are used to remind train passengers who are disembarking that they are moving from one mode of being to another, from moving train to stationary destination. The caution “mind the gap” serves to remind us to step carefully, and move on to embrace the plans and experiences that await.

The development and rollout of a native livestreaming resource during these COVID days was made possible only by the extraordinary generosity of those benefactors within our community who saw the need and helped to realize the potential. As we grow our livestreaming ministry, we anticipate being in a position to offer livestreaming services for baptisms, weddings, funerals, and any other significant life-events that are

celebrated in our Church. The pandemic has changed the way we think about participating in such significant events in our lives. Our families and friends are increasingly mobile and, often because of great distances, are unable to be physically present with us in these moments. Our livestreaming capabilities offer possibilities that heretofore we might never have countenanced. We are “minding the gap”, paying attention to the reality that physical distance is no longer insurmountable for us, and while travel might not be possible, we can now participate in the significant moments and celebrations of our families here at Church.

Another horizon we crossed during the times of pandemic was that of the distance created in all manner of parish ministries and activities. We explored different technologies to help address this shift, and settled on the ZOOM platform, as it met many of our needs. Going forward, we will continue to avail of the ZOOM platform for a variety of purposes, from worship to the provision of ongoing religious education and catechesis for the young people in our community, to novel ways of meeting and gathering in a time of social distance and limited opportunities for interpersonal engagement.

### **Gratitude Overflowing**

I want to repeat once more the words of gratitude I shared in last week’s email. So many people have shared words of encouragement and blessing with myself and with the priests of the parish. We are moved by your remembrance, and deeply touched by your goodness and well-wishes. As we sit at table together, it is not uncommon for us to comment on the goodness and graciousness of so many in our community.

The munificence of our **benefactors** and **donors** sustains our church and our parish ministries. All those who went out of their way to ensure their gifts and donations continued to benefit our parish have made a world of difference. It is only with the goodness and generosity of our benefactors that we can continue to provide ministry and services with which our parish has long been synonymous. As people have been faithful with their parish, our parish has kept faith with those organizations in our community which have continued to serve the community through the extraordinary circumstances of this past year. MEND, the Guadalupe Center, the SFV Rescue Mission Homeless Shelter, Catholic Charities, and the Pregnancy Counselling Center, are a few of those which come to mind. Aware that our local partners in making the world a better place were confronting the same financial challenges as ourselves, we felt it was important to support their efforts, inasmuch as it was possible for us.

I wanted to highlight this goodness, this stewardship, this facet of Christian discipleship, because no matter how much or how little our benefactors gave, when taken together, each individual gift was multiplied and went to make a difference for so many. **Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!**

If you’d like to make a one-time gift, or to participate in our ongoing offertory program, please point your browser on over to our parish website, and to our [donate page](#).

## Expanding our Sunday Schedule

Next Saturday evening, April 24<sup>th</sup>, we are resuming our 5:30pm Sunday Vigil Mass. I am most grateful to the Lourdes “homecoming volunteers” who are making this possible. For those who have a preference for mass on Saturday evening, and who have been attending one of our masses on Sunday morning, you’ll already be familiar with the adaptations and procedures we have in place. For those who have not been physically present for mass yet, I encourage you to visit our parish website and become familiar with our protocols and procedures.

Remember, that in order to make it possible for our volunteers to participate in the mass, the doors of the Church will be closed as soon as the liturgy gets underway. Latecomers are welcome to remain on the patio (communion will be brought to you), or to return the following morning, according to their preference. Because this is our first Saturday Evening mass in some time, please plan appropriately, and consider arriving a little earlier than not.

Once again, I take this opportunity to remind everyone of the **dispensation from the “Sunday Obligation”** which was shared with us a full year ago by Archbishop Gomez. It **continues to be in effect**, and will continue to remain so until it is deemed that the threat presented by the pandemic has receded sufficiently.

## Share Your Gifts

Speaking of our Lourdes “homecoming volunteers”, and the wonderful job they do for the rest of us, keep in mind that we can always use a few extra hands, especially when accompanied by cool dispositions. We currently have openings for service in the following roles:

- **Saturday Evening Vigil 5:30pm** – (Greeters/Check-in, Ushers, etc.)  
(Many hands make light work – consider offering to assist and grow this mass)
- Weekday Lectors (8:30am)
- Weekday Ushers (6:30am & 8:30am)
- Check-in / Greeters (Weekdays and Sundays)
- Livestream operators (8:30am Weekday Mass, and Sundays)  
(If you can send an email or watch a video on your device, we can train you for the rest)
- Bereavement Assistance

To volunteer, please don’t hesitate to reach out to Diane at the parish office if you’ve got any questions or would like more information (818-349-1500 Ext. 101), or go online to [register](#) as a Lourdes Volunteer. Appropriate training for each of these roles is provided, and there are opportunities to serve both indoors and outdoors.

## Jerusalema Dance Challenge

In a prior email I wrote about a dance challenge known as the Jerusalema Challenge that had come to my attention as one of those creative responses to building community in a time of social and physical distancing which was part of our COVID experience. Taking that idea, there are a group of parishioners who have undertaken to produce our very own “Jerusalema” challenge here at Lourdes. If you’d like to be part of this fun, community-building experience, simply come along to the parking lot of the Church near the Moran Center at 10:30 next Saturday morning, April 24<sup>th</sup>.

Sr. Frances has come up with a couple of YouTube videos for those who’d like to be prepared:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtuVWAQzGtE&t=54s> (just the steps)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TR-JP7yWpLY> (steps with music)

Remember, of course to **wear your masks**, and we will be observing appropriate social distancing.

You might be inspired by some of the following:

<https://youtu.be/AEow0IUeJCO>

(Libertatii Square, Timisoara, Romania)

<https://youtu.be/Kje6DiG-HG0>

(French Priests and Nuns)

[https://youtu.be/rC\\_DrWF6gZQ](https://youtu.be/rC_DrWF6gZQ)

(Irish Nursing Home Staff & Residents)

<https://youtu.be/PraQkCMU7Is>

(Irish Redemptorist Priests & Nuns)

<https://youtu.be/43V0KdTbqxl>

(Montreal, Canada)

[https://youtu.be/yj23\\_Z6UEck](https://youtu.be/yj23_Z6UEck)

(Irish Police Officers)

## Donation Drive-by Scheduled

Our next Donation/Drive-by is scheduled to take place on the morning of Sunday, April 25<sup>th</sup> and will run from 9am through 1pm to afford participation of everyone either arriving or departing for Sunday morning mass. This event will focus on providing canned goods for MEND, and on collecting **Stationary and Stamps** for an initiative coordinated by “**Get on the Bus**”. Those not familiar with the “Get on the Bus” initiative can read about it on their [website](#). The program ordinarily involves the transportation of children to visit with their moms or dads on or close to Mother’s Day or Father’s Day. Obviously, with pandemic considerations in play, this is not possible, but our hope is to gather enough stamps and stationary to allow children to easily write to their incarcerated loved ones, providing them with an opportunity to nurture their important family relationships despite the difficult circumstances they face.



Blessings on you all.

## Parish “Town Hall” – Mark your Calendar



On the evening of Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, at 7pm, we will host a parish “town hall” using the ZOOM platform. This will be an opportunity for parishioners to explore where we’ve come from and where we’re at now, as a family of faith here at Lourdes. More details will follow, but mark your calendars now to ensure you don’t miss this opportunity to interact with fellow parishioners, and to explore relevant topics for this extraordinary time in the life of our parish community.

## The Further Adventures of Mollie Loftus

This week I enjoyed the opportunity to see and chat with my nieces thanks to technology! The things I can do now... and I guess I always could, but didn’t know I could... While it’s not the same as spending time with them and enjoying their piercing laughter fill my ears, it’s better than nothing. But on the day when I didn’t chat with them this week, Mollie and Anna were out and about and enjoying yet another adventure. Their Dad took them for a walk up the [Hill of Tara](#). It’s a favorite hike of Mollie’s, and is a very short drive by car to get there. On this particular day, as they returned to the car park, there was great excitement as a helicopter was just taking off. They didn’t get a chance to take a picture, but the excitement of the event brought a “hunger” on the intrepid trio, and so Dad was prevailed upon to take them to get some ice-cream. Given that little Anna is but 10 months old, I can only conclude that Mollie’s negotiating skills have been improving dramatically during these times of pandemic. Suffice it to say that the ice-cream was “huge”, “nearly as big as my head”, but the size of the ice-cream was no match for Mollie’s commitment to making sure the ice-cream found its proper home in her little tummy. When I asked Mollie if Anna liked ice-cream, she told me that she did, but that she didn’t want one of her own, so Mollie shared some of hers. Even after such a “huge” ice-cream, they managed to eat their dinner that evening, and then they settled in for their nightly ritual. From infancy, Mollie’s mam and dad have always read a story to her... every night. Now Mollie is intent on sharing this gift with her baby sister, and Anna certainly seems to be enjoying the experience at least as much as Mollie did.



For myself, this reminds me of a gift my own parents gave to me and to my siblings. There were always books around the house. I’ve shared in a prior letter how much I admire Mollie’s parents for intentionally sharing a love of reading with their daughter. A book opens up a whole new world to its reader. In my own experience, a love of reading ensured for me that my world was always full of wonder and amazing possibilities. To this day I can still see, in my minds eye, some of my favorite books as a child. I was a voracious reader, and while I may have grown up in a small rural village in the remote West of Ireland, books brought me to places and parts of the world I have yet to see or visit physically. Later in life, books brought me to encounter ideas and world-views that were new, challenging, and sometimes contrary to my own ways of thinking. They challenged me to think in ways otherwise closed to me, were it not for the gift of books.

Mollie continues to navigate her role as a big sister. It's a transition in her young life that hasn't always been easy for her, but the example of her parents, her own innate sense of care for others, and the many stories she reads in her books, have all gone to help her in her becoming a thoughtful, caring and loving sister. More, despite how little she is, she is becoming a caring and loving person for others in her life – her family, her friends at school, the little birds and animals she encounters in her garden, the animals she meets on local farms... all elicit from her not only a fascination, but a care and a concern. As I say, the books Mollie reads have contributed to this growth in her. But so too have the “books” Mollie reads in the lives of those around her, for we are all “living books”.

When we consider our scriptures, it is good to consider them as the books which narrate for us the experiences of God's people past. They contain wisdom and insights, challenges and concerns, and they invite us to engage with them so that we might continue to grow in wisdom, insight and fullness of life for ourselves. So too, the lives of the people around us are “living books”, in which we read of all manner of human experience, and our reading offers us an opportunity to grow and become more than we are throughout our lives. I sometimes wonder if the book of my life is readily recognizable as belonging in the “Christian” section of the world's great library?

We will not always be impressed by that to which we are exposed in our reading in life. We may not always agree with what we learn. However, the stories of God's people past (scripture) and the stories of God's people present (lived experience of our time), all have something to offer us, something to enrich our lives, if we but take the time to consider and open our hearts and minds to all that God places before us for our continued growth and learning. Our learning may find its expression in our articulation of a perspective or a world-view contrary to some others. Or it may find its expression in our choosing to behave or act differently in the world, in order that we might intentionally work to make the world a better place than we found it. For those who intentionally follow the path of Jesus, the book of our lives will have a Christian sense about them.

As our parish begins to emerge from the distance of pandemic, it would be naive to think we might simply resume our old ways. In the same way that we have individually come through so much, so collectively, it will be important for us to mark what we have learned together these long months and make choices about how we will choose to be as a community of believers going forward. We might do well to contemplate the “books of our lives”, and to do so in the light of the experiences of God's people past as it has been passed on to us in our scriptures and in the traditions handed on to us through the generations. With a deepened sense of appreciation of God's faithfulness, and of our faith with one another, we might find ourselves richly graced and blessed as we move forward as a community of faith here in Northridge. By God's grace, we will continue to grow in faith, hope and love, boldly becoming ever more committed disciples of Jesus, our Lord.

God's continued blessings on you and yours in this Easter Season.

*Fr. David*

## Schedule of Masses

*Effective March 7th*

### Sunday:

7:30am (English – Indoors & Patio)  
9:00am (Indoors, Patio & Livestream)  
11:00am (Indoors, Patio & Livestream)  
12:30pm (Indoors, Patio & Livestream  
- Spanish)

*Effective March 8th*

### Weekday

Monday – Friday

6:30am (Indoors & Patio)

Monday – Saturday

8:30am (Indoors, Patio & Livestream)

**\*\*Access to parking lot through driveway**

**immediately EAST of Church to avoid school carline\*\***

**NOTE: Saturday Evening Vigil Mass at 5:30pm resumes next Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>**

[Protocols for Participation in Sunday \(in-person\) Worship](#)

[Protocols for Participation in Weekday \(in-person\) Worship](#)

**NOTE:** In the event of inclement weather, it is possible that outdoor participation may be unavailable.

## Confession/Reconciliation

As LA County is adjudged to be in the “Orange Tier” of our pandemic response, the Sacrament of Reconciliation continues to be available **by appointment**. Call the parish office (818-349-1500, Ext. 101) or [email](#) to arrange for a mutually acceptable time for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation.

The sacrament is also **available Saturday afternoons** from **4pm – 5pm** at the **Moran Center** without appointment.

[Protocols for Participation in Sacramental Reconciliation](#)

## Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick / “Last Rites”

Those seeking to avail of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick are asked to call the parish office at 818-349-1500. During “office hours”, staff will assist you and arrange for a priest to visit. Outside of office hours, an option to have your call forwarded to an “emergency line” is available, and you will be connected to a priest who will arrange a visit with you. This effectively means that priests continue to be available to share the sacrament 24/7.

Be advised that at this time hospitals and healthcare facilities may not permit visitors, including priests, to enter their facilities. Everyone is asked to carefully consider whether delaying the sacrament may be prudent.

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### **Pastoral “Visit”**

To arrange a “visit” with Fr. Fili or Fr. David, please feel free to call the parish office (818-349-1500 Ext. 101) or to [email](#) for an appointment. Pastoral “visits” are available via phone or by zoom call, depending on preference.

### **Tuesday Morning Coffee with the Pastor**

On Tuesday mornings, following the 8:30am mass livestreamed from Church, parishioners are invited to join an informal get-together by means of the zoom platform. Grab a cup of tea or coffee, and come spend 30-45 minutes in conversation with fellow parishioners. To receive the ZOOM details for the gathering, call (818-349-1500 Ext. 101) or [email](#) the parish office.

### **Friday Night Zoom with the Pastor**

Originally conceived as an informal Q&A inspired by those who participated in our ALPHA process, these Friday nights continue to be occasions when parishioners get to submit questions for reflection and consideration. **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday evening of the month at 7pm** is an opportunity to gather with fellow parishioners and to explore questions of faith, current events, or simply enjoy the occasion to ask a question you’ve always wanted to ask, but never really had the opportunity. To receive the ZOOM details for the gathering, call (818-349-1500 Ext. 101) or [email](#) the parish office.

Our **Religious Education** staff continue to work with **Families of Faith**, our family-centered approach to growing in faith and preparing for sacrament. All sessions take place remotely using a video-conferencing platform suitable to our needs. For more information, please [email](#) or call Sr. Frances Kennedy. Leave your information/question at the RE office number 818-349-1285, and Sr. Frances will return your call.