

## **THE CLOSURE OF CATHOLIC CHURCHES. WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED THUS FAR?**

Have you taken time to think how this pandemic has affected you? Have you taken the time to think about how this pandemic will continue to affect you in the months to come? Remember, it's not over!

Or better, do you think you have been thinking TOO MUCH about yourself/family/friends/your church community? Has the rest of society seemed less real during this time of pandemic? Has our social isolation taught us to see others only as potential threats?

What have we, as Catholic Christians, learned as society begins to slowly progress forward?

**First**, let's hope that we have been loving God and our neighbors in a **SACRIFICIAL MANNER**.

What does that mean? To sacrifice for the love of God and neighbor is when we have taken the time to self isolate, quarantine, tend to the sick at home, support first responders with our prayers, avoid public places, not hoarding food and other supplies, working remotely from home, being patient with our children/grandchildren with their online education, etc. Are these not spiritual and sacrificial actions? If we are not conscious of loving God and our neighbors in the above ways, our time of isolation as Catholic Christians has only been about "me, myself and I."

**These above actions of "shelter in place" are spiritual sacrificial expressions of our love of God and neighbor.**

**Secondly**, by taking the extraordinary measure to suspend public worship, to NOT GO physically to a church/synagogue/mosque, is an **extraordinary spiritual sacrifice** in our love for God and neighbor. We are not just following governmental or worldly or secular medical wisdom, but we are truly being the presence of God's love for the sake of the common good.

Remember that we do not restrict God's presence to a building. It is true that for us as Roman Catholics, Christ is uniquely present in the Blessed Sacrament, in our active and conscious participation of the Sunday Eucharist. But these are not the only way God draws near to us.

The goodness of God is never scarce and God is never distant from us. Conscious, then, of these spiritual sacrificial actions of isolation and temporary closure of houses of worship, we can only be strengthened in our love for God and neighbor.

Let us take consolation with the following **spiritual mantra of Julian of Norwich**:

***"All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."***



Julian of Norwich, also known as Dame Julian or Mother Julian, was an English **\*\*anchorite** of the Middle Ages. She wrote the earliest surviving book in the English language to be written by a woman, *Revelations of Divine Love* (November 8, 1342-1416, United Kingdom).

**St. Julian of Norwich, intercede for us as we continue to shelter  
(and make sacrifice) in love for God and humanity**

**\*\*An anchorite or anchoress** (female: **anchore**) from [Ancient Greek](#): "one who has retired from the world", signifying "to withdraw", "to retire") is someone who, for religious reasons, withdraws from secular society so as to be able to lead an intensely [prayer](#)-oriented, [ascetic](#), or [Eucharist](#)-focused life.

