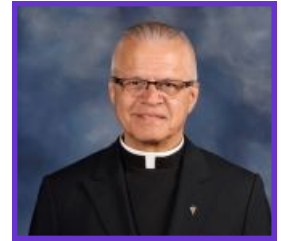


A Message from our Pastor, Fr. Peter M. Escalante



Greetings all:

Due to the CoronaVirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the Diocese of San Diego has made the following decisions regarding parish activities:

- 1. As of Monday, March 16, no public Masses (Sunday or weekday) will be offered, indefinitely;*
- 2. Bishop McElroy has dispensed our Sunday obligation, until further notice;*
- 3. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered by appointment only;*
- 4. Lenten Communal Penance Services have been cancelled;*
- 5. Schools and religious education classes are suspended until further notice;*
- 6. Mass will be available online via the Diocese website.*

Pertaining to Mission San Diego, we will follow our regular Mass schedule this weekend, March 14/15. While we will not be offering daily masses, the Mission Church will remain open daily for individual prayer, 7:00am – 7:00pm, via the courtyard door.

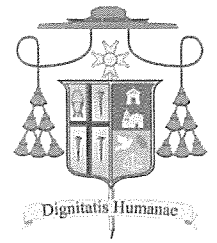
We encourage private prayer and devotion during this critical time, either here or at home. It is our faith and belief that when we are unable to physically receive Communion we can spiritually receive the Eucharistic Presence of our Lord. Many saints throughout the history of our Church have made this prayer frequently;

*My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
Come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if
You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.*

We thank you for your spirit of cooperation and support. Bishop McElroy's message to all the Catholic faithful of San Diego follows this message. Let us pray for one another, the Church and the safety and well-being of all.

God bless and keep you!

Fr. Peter



Office of the Bishop

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In today's first reading from the Book of Exodus, we witness the people of Israel as they struggled with the challenges and the graces, the suffering and the triumphs, the moments of hope and of utter frustration that marked their arduous forty year journey through the desert and into the Promised Land.

For every Lent, this historic journey of the Israelites is the symbol of the People of God in our own day attempting to follow the pathway of the Lord amidst the uncertainty and obstacles that lie all around us in the modern world. But in this Lent, in this moment, our Lenten journey has taken on new dimensions as we confront a global pandemic that will, for a time, upend our normal way of life and call us to a deepened sense of sacrifice and faith. In these forty days we will bear Lenten penances not of our own choosing, the necessity of which we will not fully understand.

The great temptation of the Jewish people in the wilderness was that of fear and panic, a loss of confidence, community and trust. And in these days of spreading illness and economic losses, fear seems all around us — fear of becoming ill, fear for the health and safety of those whom we love, fear for economic security for ourselves and our families, and the fear that comes from the recognition that for some of the most vulnerable among us, this pandemic will claim their lives.

It is important for us all to distinguish between giving in to fear and the steps that we need to take in prudence to protect the health and the common good of the whole of our society. Each of us will have obligations in these days to protect ourselves, our families, and the entire community. It is out of this responsibility to protect the safety of all that the diocese will be suspending all public Masses after

this Sunday. I have asked every pastor to keep our churches open for additional time during this period to allow for individual visits to the Blessed Sacrament and prayer.

The strongest antidote to fear in this moment lies in our understanding that the core issue for us as people of faith lies in confronting the question that the Israelites posed in today's reading from Exodus: "Is the Lord in our midst or not?"

And thus our observance of Lent this year provides the most illuminating possible backdrop for the burdens that each one of us, individually, collectively and globally, will face in the coming weeks.

It is the experiences which upend our lives that most powerfully reveal our ultimate dependence on the God who created every blessing which we know in this life and who sustains us in a tender and personal love that knows no bounds.

It is our bond with the suffering Jesus Christ that consoles us with a special strength as we approach Good Friday amidst coming hardships that may weigh us down.

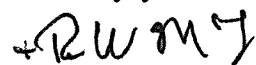
And it is the transformative recognition that Christ has risen from the dead that reveals the overwhelming power of hope for ourselves and for our world.

"Is the Lord in our midst?" Our emphatic yes to this question, revealed not merely in an intellectual assent, but in a living conviction that surrounds our personal response to the challenges that lie ahead, is the greatest Lenten observance that we can undertake in these days to reflect the core values of our faith and witness in the world.

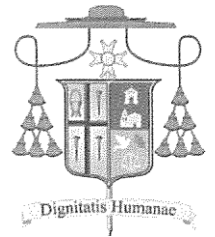
It was the hardships and the faith of the Jewish people during their journey in the desert that formed them into a people. And in these days of challenge for our society and our world, we have the chance and the opportunity to ennoble both our nation and our world by testifying constantly to generosity over selfishness, compassion over callousness, idealism over cynicism, and hope over fear.

With all best wishes I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. McElroy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Most Reverend W. McElroy
Diocese of San Diego



Questions and Answers about Mass, Sacraments and Private Masses

1. What is the policy on the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

All Communal Reconciliation Services should be canceled because they involve significant crowds. The Individual celebration of the Sacrament should continue, and even be expanded to reflect the spiritual anxieties people are feeling at this time.

2. Can weddings be celebrated publicly and include a Nuptial Mass? Yes.

Such events rarely exceed two hundred fifty people and the stress of canceling would be enormous for couples and their families.

3. Are funerals permitted?

Yes, the celebration of funerals should follow the norms which you ordinarily used in your parish. It is particularly important to console the bereaved at this moment.

4. Can already scheduled Quienceñeras be Celebrated?

Yes. Crowds for the Mass rarely reach two hundred fifty people, and thus can be accommodated within the public health provisions necessary in these days.