April 29, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Easter blessings to you and your families! The Easter season is a season of hope grounded in the resurrection of our Lord. The limitations we faced on Easter Sunday due to the pandemic, do not change in any way Christ’s victory over death, and the promise that this brings to each of us. At the same time, I am keenly aware of the hunger that all our faithful are experiencing of not being able to gather and pray as a community. But we remain hopeful that restrictions will be gradually lifted in the near future.

When health restrictions are eased and we are able to start gathering together again, it is important for all of us to understand that things probably won’t immediately go back to the way they used to be.

Diocesan guidelines for our parish and diocesan activities will continue to be responsive to what health experts and government officials indicate. These guidelines will also be responsive to the collective wisdom of representatives from our Presbyterate, California Catholic Conference and Bishops of California.

We are also very mindful of the collective yearning to return to “normalcy” in our sacramental and parish life, while we are also committed to doing so in a prudent and charitable way, mindful for the well-being of all, especially the most vulnerable.

Specifics of when public Mass and other sacraments will resume and how they will be celebrated is being presently examined. We will be communicating these changes in more detail to you, as time approaches, but you can anticipate that:

• Attendance may be limited at any given Mass or Service.
• A general dispensation from the Sunday obligation may probably continue for all (but especially for those in the most vulnerable groups, as in the elderly, compromised immune systems, etc).
• Social distancing and the use of face covers will probably be necessary.
• Liturgical changes will probably continue (e.g. omission of Holy Communion from the Chalice, only Holy Communion to be offered on the hand).
• These changes will continue to evolve over time.

We will keep you informed: please know we are sincerely thankful for your patience and understanding as we prepare for this next phase. The well-being of you and your families continue to be our top priority. You remain in my prayers.

Your brother in Christ,

+Most Reverend Daniel E. Garcia
Bishop of Monterey
U.S. and Canadian Bishops to Seek Intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, for Strength in Struggle Against COVID-19

April 23, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Every year, the Church seeks the special intercession of the Mother of God during the month of May. This year, Archbishop José Gómez of Los Angeles and President of the USCCB invites you to join him and his brother bishops of the U.S., along with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on May 1st in renewing the consecrations of the two nations to the care of our Blessed Mother. It will occur at 12 pm PDT / 3 pm EDT. Please find attached the official invitation from the United Sates Conference of Catholic Bishops (English/Spanish).

See following page for invitation.

For more information and to join me in prayer please visit:

https://twitter.com/USCCB

https://www.facebook.com/usccb/

https://www.instagram.com/usccb/?hl=en

In Christ,

Most Reverend Daniel E. Garcia
Bishop of Monterey
WASHINGTON – As the world continues to face the ongoing effects of the global pandemic of the coronavirus, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has announced that the U.S. bishops will join the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on May 1 in renewing the consecrations of the two nations to the care of our Blessed Mother.

Through a collective dedication or entrustment of a nation to Mary, an act of consecration is meant to be a reminder to the faithful of the Blessed Mother’s witness to the Gospel and to ask for her effective intercession before her Son on behalf of those in need. Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore, the first bishop of the United States, promoted devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, and placed the United States under her protection in a pastoral letter of 1792. The twenty-one bishops attending the Sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1846 determined to name the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, as the Patroness of the United States, and Pope Pius XI approved this decision the following year. More recently, the dedication of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. in 1959 was the opportunity for the bishops to once again consecrate the nation to the Blessed Mother. Several popes have likewise consecrated the world to Mary on various occasions.

The consecration on May 1 follows a similar action of the bishops’ conference of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM) who consecrated their nations to Our Lady of Guadalupe on Easter Sunday. The renewal of consecration planned in this country for May 1 does not change the designation of Mary as the Patroness of the United States under the title of the Immaculate Conception. Rather, this prayer reaffirms and renews previous Marian entrustments, and unites us in solidarity with our Holy Father, who recently established the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, as a source of protection and strength.

“This will give the Church the occasion to pray for Our Lady’s continued protection of the vulnerable, healing of the unwell, and wisdom for those who work to cure this terrible virus,” said Archbishop Gomez in a letter to the U.S. bishops. Each year, the Church seeks the special intercession of the Mother of God during the month of May. “This year, we seek the assistance of Our Lady all the more earnestly as we face together the effects of the global pandemic,” he continued.

Archbishop Gomez will lead a brief liturgy with the prayer of re-consecration on Friday, May 1 at 3:00 pm EDT and has invited the bishops to join in from their respective dioceses and asked them to extend the invitation to the faithful in their dioceses for their participation. A liturgy guide will be available to assist the faithful who may join in by tuning into the USCCB’s social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
Covid-19: A Prayer of Solidarity

For all who have contracted coronavirus,
   We pray for care and healing.

For those who are particularly vulnerable,
   We pray for safety and protection.

For all who experience fear or anxiety,
   We pray for peace of mind and spirit.

For affected families who are facing difficult decisions between food on the table or public safety,
   We pray for policies that recognize their plight.

For those who do not have adequate health insurance,
   We pray that no family will face financial burdens alone.

For those who are afraid to access care due to immigration status,
   We pray for recognition of the God-given dignity of all.

For our brothers and sisters around the world,
   We pray for shared solidarity.

For public officials and decision makers,
   We pray for wisdom and guidance.

Father, during this time may your Church be a sign of hope, comfort and love to all.
   Grant peace.
   Grant comfort.
   Grant healing.
   Be with us, Lord.

Amen.
Statement of U.S. Bishops’ President on Pope Francis’ Urbi et Orbi Message

March 27, 2020

WASHINGTON – Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued the following statement on the Holy Father’s Urbi et Orbi message today.

Archbishop Gomez’s full statement follows:

“Along with my brother bishops of the United States, I am grateful for Pope Francis’ Urbi et Orbi message today. We join with him in asking God to bless the world and to deliver us from the coronavirus pandemic.

“I think we all understand that we took part today in something historic, as the whole world was gathered together through communications media by the successor of St. Peter, united in one prayer before the living presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist.

“It was a moving and emotional moment, and I urge my fellow Catholics, and every person of good will, to read and reread Pope Francis’ beautiful meditation.


“In his message, the Holy Father reminds us that this time of the coronavirus is a call to courage, a call to faith. And as he says, faith does not mean simply agreeing with a set of ideas. Faith means making a decision to entrust our lives to Jesus Christ and to follow his path, to embrace his cross.

“The Holy Father tells us today that this pandemic is a time for conversion, a time for us to make choices about what truly matters in our lives, a time for us to change the priorities of our societies. It is a time to turn to God and to recognize that no matter how advanced our civilization and technology, we cannot save ourselves. We need God.

“In this moment saints are being made, the Holy Father tells us, pointing to the quiet heroism of ordinary people carrying out their daily duties in extraordinary times, serving one another with kindness and patience. ‘How many people pray, offer and intercede for the good of all,’ our Holy Father observes. ‘Prayer and silent service: these are our winning weapons.’

“So, let us continue to unite with Pope Francis in asking the Lord, through the intercession of Mary our Blessed Mother, to bless our world and to give us the courage to love and serve our brothers and sisters in this time of trial.”
USCCB Responds to Coronavirus

Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has issued the following regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19):

With the worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus, we are confronted once more with the fragility of our lives, and again we are reminded of our common humanity; that the peoples of this world are our brothers and sisters, that we are all one family under God.

God does not abandon us, he goes with us even now in this time of trial and testing. In this moment, it is important for us to anchor our hearts in the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Now is the time to intensify our prayers and sacrifices for the love of God and the love of our neighbor. Let us draw closer to one another in our love for him, and rediscover the things that truly matter in our lives.

United with our Holy Father Pope Francis, let us pray in solidarity for our brothers and sisters here and around the world who are sick. Let us pray for those who have lost loved ones to this virus. May God console them and grant them peace.

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas.

We fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana. Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance.

Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind.

Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts. We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy. Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen