



St. Leonard Catholic Church

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March 15, 2020
III Sunday of Lent

My dear St. Leonard family,

I know this is a very difficult time, especially for the many people that are dealing and suffering due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In moments like this we must keep focused on the common good, remain calm, work together, be prudent, be kind and generous with our fellow brothers and sisters but above all, we must pray so the Lord and Our Lady of Guadalupe may spare our families and communities from a more grave epidemy.

As you know, a *dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation has been granted to all the faithful of the Archdiocese of San Antonio by Archbishop Gustavo Garcia Siller, MSPS, therefore all Sunday Masses are being suspended until further notice.*

I am mindful that not to be able to come to Church and receive the Body of Christ on Sunday is truly heartbreaking, however I know this decision was not made lightly; it was done after much discernment and for the good of the Christian faithful and our community.

That being said, *I know that especially in moment of anxiety and distress it's really important to come together and pray, and ask Our Compassionate Father to protect us and guide us, so I want to share with you what we will do at St Leonard's in the weeks ahead.*

+ ***The Church will be open for prayer and Adoration every day at 5 pm.*** Together we will pray and ask the Lord to intercede for us. I'll ask the Deacons and the staff to be available for counseling, prayer and blessing of religious articles and water.

+ ***Weekly Masses will be offered every day, Monday to Friday, at 6:30 pm with no more than 200 attendees,*** if needed we will add another Mass to our weekly schedule.

+ ***The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe - La Placita will remain open for prayer and meditation;*** I encourage you to come and visit Her and ask for Her intercession.

+ Even thou all ***Religious Education classes are canceled for the time being,*** I am asking Jessy to work closely with our Elect and Candidates to ensure they will continue to receive their formation.

+ ***Funerals, Weddings, and Quinceañeras will be celebrated as scheduled*** with no more than 200 people attending.

+ ***All gatherings and meetings will be postponed until further notice.***

+ **Visits to the sick, homebound and nursing homes should be postponed until further notice.** Anointing for emergencies or those close to death will still be available.

+ **The Parish Office will continue to be open in our regular schedule:** Tue. – Thur. 9 am – 1 pm & 2 - 5 pm & Friday 9 am until Noon unless we receive a different direction from the Archdiocesan Business office. I'll let you know if we do.

+ **Be safe, wash your hands, remain cautious of gatherings with many people and use common sense.**

This Sunday, and until our current situation goes back to normal, **I will assure you that I will privately celebrate the Sunday Mass and will offer the Mass for all the intentions we had already, and also for yours.**

Some of you have kindly inquire about how to keep giving your weekly contributions. My suggestions are 1) to use online giving, 2) to bring your envelope or donation to the office or 3) to place it in our alms box during our weekly Masses. May God reward you abundantly for keeping St. Leonard in your mind even during this time!

Brothers, sisters, let's please be mindful of the elderly in our community, let's take care of them and help them if there is a need. If there is someone in need, let's share from what we have, from hand sanitizers to food and other supplies; **remember we are in this together!** This isn't the time to be greedy or selfish; on the contrary, **let's be generous, loving and kind; let's be Christ-like!**

It is my hope that during this time, we all be reminded of the great gift of the Eucharist & the importance of prayer and spirituality in our daily lives. The truth is that life is fragile; only God suffices.

Friends don't be afraid! The Lord is - and will always be - with us! So, don't lose peace, don't lose hope! God loves you and His love never fails! On the contrary, during this time, trust in the infinite mercy of Our Loving God, jump into His loving arms and let this situation bring you closer to Him!

Finally, **let's keep praying** for all those who are infected, for their families, for those who care for them, for first-responders, doctors, nurses and cleaning personnel, may the Lord keep all of them safe.

I entrust all of you to the tender care of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Know of my love, support and prayers,


Fr. J. Eduardo Martinez
Administrator