



Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church

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Our Lady of Sorrows Parishioners

March 14, 2020

To our good and faithful people,

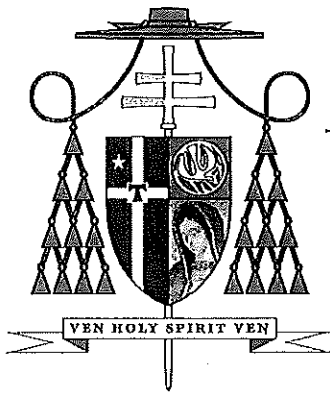
These days bring a deep sense of loss and sadness to me, and I am sure that I share that sadness with you as well. May these be days of deep and meaningful prayer for each of us. While it is true that this is not a time when we can come together to pray, it is most certainly a time for prayer. It is not a time for meetings or activities or gatherings, but it is a time for prayer. May the space that is created by the cancellations in our life lead us to pray in our homes, share the scripture, and nourish our souls. I know that this is very hard. It is very difficult for me. As a Church, we are community, we pray together, we struggle together. I am so sorry that we cannot be a better support to each other in these times without risking great harm.

While we will not have Sunday Masses, and have cancelled or postponed all other non-essential gatherings, we are still allowed to come together in small groups for daily Mass, weddings, and funerals. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will still be available during our regularly scheduled times. We will keep our daily Mass schedule, asking those who come to spread out as much as they can. We will leave the church unlocked as much as we can for those who might want to pray the Stations of the Cross or spend time in individual prayer. We have postponed the rummage sale, and will hold it once the health restrictions have been lifted. Please feel free to continue donating items.

We have removed the holy water from the baptismal and holy water fonts, and have purchased holy water bottles which will be available next week in church or in the office for families who would like a personal bottle. The holding of hands at the Our Father and physical contact during the Sign of Peace, such as handshakes or embraces, are suspended. It is important to maintain some physical distance both in Church and outside in order to reduce the possibility of spreading the virus. The Eucharist will be offered during Masses only under the form of Consecrated Bread. In order to limit the spread of the virus, the chalice and Precious Blood will not be offered to communicants at Mass. I respectfully request that everyone receive Communion in the hand at this time as an act of charity and prudence towards the entire community and in recognition of the current unique threat of infection. Those who are unable or afraid to receive the Eucharist are encouraged to make a Spiritual Communion.

When you come to church, and in all of your interactions, I encourage you to act as if you may be contagious but do not yet know it. It will be a great act of charity to not share this illness with any of our brothers and sisters, especially not with those who are most vulnerable to the disease. If you are in need of direct pastoral care or know someone who is, please call Fr. Dennis Venegas at the parish office. If you cannot reach him there in case of urgent need, please call him on his mobile at 210-797-3077. Thank you. Peace and blessing.

Love,



Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!

Archbishop Gustavo issues decree regarding changes impacting Catholic parishes and schools in the archdiocese in response to COVID-19

PUBLISHED: MARCH 13, 2020

Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSpS, issued the following decree, March 13, 2020, to the people of the Archdiocese of San Antonio about required changes in response to COVID-19.

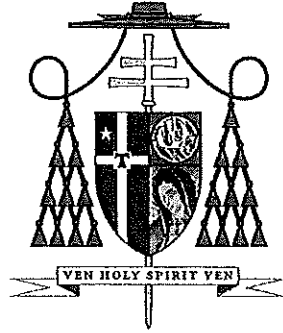
I am with you on our Lenten journey. At this time we are confronted once more with the fragility of our lives, and again we are reminded of our common humanity; that we are all one family under God. We want to face this crisis together. It is so important to be anchoring in our faith; to have God at the center of our daily lives.

In regards to COVID-19, the Archdiocese of San Antonio is trying to be pro-active rather than reactive to this rapidly changing situation, which especially impacts the most vulnerable.

In appropriate response to the current crisis, local, state and federal officials have been taking additional actions regarding this public health emergency. This morning, officials with the city of San Antonio and Bexar County announced that they were banning gatherings of more than 500 people, and strongly suggested that this measure extends to groups of 250 or more. In addition, this afternoon the Texas governor declared a state disaster declaration over the coronavirus. I am also enacting several measures impacting Catholic parishes and schools in the archdiocese.

While COVID-19 is unlikely to be serious for most people, we have an obligation to care for the very young, the aged, and those with underlying health issues. An effective way we can care for their health and safety is minimizing large group gatherings for the time being.

We are not taking these actions lightly, but with the realization that large gatherings are a factor in the spread of the disease; that there is a long lead time before symptoms present themselves and infection is known; that priests, deacons, and lay ministers could unknowingly transmit the disease to others, or congregants to one another; and that the saving work of Jesus Christ present in the Church is necessary at a time such as this.



DECREE

Conscious of my duty to prudently lead the Christian faithful of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, and in light of new information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and local and state health officials regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus), and for the good of the Christian faithful and our community, I Decree that:

- 1) The Sunday Mass obligation is hereby dispensed for all Catholics effective immediately. Public Masses in parishes and other chapels shall be suspended starting this weekend of March 14-15, except for small groups at the discretion of the pastor, such as daily Mass. Presiding at wedding liturgies and quinceañeras is at the discretion of the pastor. We must bury the dead, and funeral services will still take place, with awareness of congregation size. Whenever possible churches will be kept open during the daytime for private prayer and Eucharistic Adoration.
- 2) All non-essential gatherings at parishes for the rest of March are cancelled or postponed, pending further notice. This includes but is not limited to previously-scheduled Confirmation ceremonies, and religious education classes. Communication on Catholic schools will follow.
- 3) We are advising against home visits at this time, but in situations of serious pastoral necessity these decisions need to be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the pastor, responding to the best of their abilities to these requests. We must also follow hospital and nursing home guidelines regarding access as well.
- 4) I encourage viewing and participating in the daily and Sunday Masses via CTSA, other television outlets or through archdiocesan electronic media. Other devotions, such as perhaps praying the daily rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet, are most appropriate during this time.
- 5) I will make a determination in consultation with archdiocesan leadership, health officials, and civil authorities regarding extending any of the above by March 31.

This Decree is effective immediately and remains in effect until revoked.

Accompanied by the Lord, who will sustain us through this tribulation -- and through the hard work of our dedicated health professionals -- we will make it through these trying times that may come over the following weeks and months. May all of these efforts help us to slow the spread of COVID-19.

I, as your shepherd during this most difficult time ask you to think of what you can do for others, and I invite you to pray:

Our Lady of Guadalupe, in these times of tribulation we turn to you O Mother.

**See with compassion the suffering of your beloved daughters and sons
affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic throughout the entire world.**

**Ask your Son to have mercy on us bringing healing to those infected and protection to all
your children.**

**Jesus Christ, savior of all people, grant us courage to accompany and pray
for the entire world in the wake of sorrow and uncertainty.**

We seek refuge in you and according to your promise, deliver us from this danger.

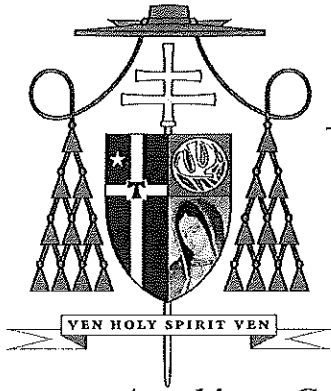
Amen

Given at the Chancery of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, this thirteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gustavo Garcia-Siller" with a stylized flourish at the end.

+Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, MSpS
Archbishop of San Antonio



¡Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!

Arzobispo Gustavo emite decreto sobre cambios que afectan parroquias y escuelas católicas en la arquidiócesis en respuesta a COVID-19

PUBLICADO: 13 DE MARZO DE 2020

El Arzobispo Gustavo García Siller, MSpS, emitió el siguiente decreto, el 13 de marzo de 2020, al pueblo de la Arquidiócesis de San Antonio sobre los cambios requeridos en respuesta al COVID-19.

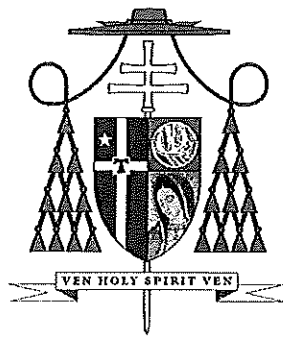
Estoy con ustedes en nuestro camino de Cuaresma. En este momento nos enfrentamos una vez más con la fragilidad de nuestras vidas y nuevamente se nos recuerda nuestra humanidad común; que todos somos una sola familia como hijos de Dios. Queremos enfrentar esta crisis juntos. Es muy importante estar anclados en nuestra fe; tener a Dios en el centro de nuestra vida diaria.

Con respecto al COVID-19, la Arquidiócesis de San Antonio está tratando de ser proactiva en lugar de ser reactiva a esta situación que cambia rápidamente y que afecta especialmente a los más vulnerables de entre nosotros.

Como respuesta adecuada a la crisis actual, funcionarios locales, estatales y federales han estado llevando a cabo acciones adicionales relacionadas con esta emergencia de salud pública. Esta mañana, autoridades de la ciudad de San Antonio y del condado de Bexar anunciaron que estaban prohibiendo reuniones de más de 500 personas, y sugirieron fuertemente que esta medida se extienda a grupos de 250 o más. Yo también estoy promulgando varias medidas que afectan a las parroquias y a las escuelas católicas en la arquidiócesis.

Si bien es poco probable que el COVID-19 sea grave para la mayoría de las personas, tenemos la obligación de cuidar a los que son muy jóvenes, a los ancianos y a las personas con problemas de salud subyacentes. Una forma efectiva de cuidar su salud y seguridad es minimizar por el momento las reuniones de grupos grandes.

No estamos tomando estas acciones a la ligera, sino con la constatación de que las grandes reuniones son un factor en la propagación de la enfermedad; que hay un largo periodo antes de que se presenten los síntomas y se conozca la infección; que sin saberlo, sacerdotes, diáconos y ministros laicos podrían transmitir la enfermedad a otros, o los congregantes entre sí, y que la obra salvadora de Jesucristo presente en la Iglesia es necesaria en un momento como este.



DECRETO

Consciente de mi deber de dirigir con prudencia a los fieles cristianos de la Arquidiócesis de San Antonio, y a la luz de información nueva emitida por los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades de Estados Unidos, así como por funcionarios de salud locales y estatales con respecto al COVID-19 (coronavirus), y para el bien de los fieles cristianos y nuestra comunidad, decreto que:

- 1) La obligación de la misa dominical se dispensa a todos los católicos con vigencia inmediata. Las misas públicas en parroquias y otras capillas se suspenderán a partir de este fin de semana del 14 y 15 de marzo, a excepción de grupos pequeños a discreción de cada párroco, como en los casos de misa entre semana. Presidir las liturgias de matrimonios y de bendición de quinceañeras queda a discreción de cada párroco. Debemos enterrar a los muertos y los servicios funerarios se seguirán llevando a cabo, teniendo en cuenta el número de los congregantes. Siempre que sea posible, las iglesias se mantendrán abiertas durante el día para la oración privada y la adoración eucarística.
- 2) Todas las reuniones no esenciales en las parroquias para el resto de marzo se cancelan o posponen hasta nuevo aviso. Esto incluye, pero no se limita, a ceremonias de confirmación programadas previamente y clases de educación religiosa. A continuación del presente se comunicará información sobre las escuelas católicas.
- 3) En este momento desaconsejamos visitas a domicilio, pero en situaciones de grave necesidad pastoral estas decisiones deben tomarse caso por caso a discreción del párroco, respondiendo lo mejor posible a estas solicitudes. También debemos seguir las pautas de los hospitales y hogares de ancianos con respecto al acceso.
- 4) Exhorto a ver y participar en las misas diarias y dominicales a través de la Televisión Católica de San Antonio (CTSA), de otros servicios televisivos o por medios electrónicos arquidiocesanos. Otras devociones, como puede ser el rezo del rosario diario o la Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia, son sumamente adecuadas durante este tiempo.

5) Tomaré una determinación antes del 31 de marzo, en consulta con el equipo directivo arquidiocesano, los funcionarios de salud y las autoridades civiles, con respecto a extender cualquiera de las medidas anteriormente mencionadas.

Este Decreto entra en vigor de inmediato y permanece vigente hasta que sea revocado.

Acompañados por el Señor, quien nos sostendrá a lo largo de esta tribulación, y por medio del arduo trabajo de nuestros dedicados profesionales de la salud, saldremos adelante de estos tiempos de prueba que pueden surgir en las próximas semanas y meses. Que todos estos esfuerzos nos ayuden a frenar la propagación del COVID-19.

Como su pastor durante este momento tan difícil, les pido que piensen en lo que pueden hacer por los demás y los invito a rezar:

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, en estos tiempos de tribulación nos dirigimos a ti, Madre.

**Mira con compasión el sufrimiento de tus amados hijos e hijas
afectados por la pandemia de coronavirus en el mundo entero.**

**Ruega a tu Hijo que tenga misericordia de nosotros
llevando la salud a los infectados y la protección a todos tus hijos.**

**Jesucristo, salvador de los hombres, concédenos valor para acompañar y orar
por el mundo entero ante el dolor y la incertidumbre.**

Buscamos refugio en ti y conforme a tu promesa libranos de este peligro.

Amén.

Dado en la Cancillería de la Arquidiócesis de San Antonio, en este décimo tercer día de marzo, en el año de nuestro Señor dos mil veinte.

Atentamente en Cristo.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gustavo" in a large, cursive script, with "m. sps" written in smaller letters below it.

+ Gustavo García Siller, MSpS
Arzobispo de San Antonio