

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Please know of my prayers for you in these days of anxiety and uncertainty.

It is true that with the worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus, we are facing a global health emergency that is like nothing we have seen in our lifetimes. But our hope is in the Lord and we know that he will give us his grace and mercy in our time of need.

We need to approach this emergency with faith and confidence in God and also with prudence. As we know, the virus is spreading here in Los Angeles, throughout the United States, and in many other countries. Doctors, public health officials, and civil authorities are still trying to determine the scope of the emergency and come up with appropriate measures for treating the illness and containing the outbreak.

We also know that this virus is contagious and is spread person-to-person. It can be gravely dangerous for certain vulnerable members of our community, including the elderly and those with existing health issues. Already this illness has killed several thousand people worldwide.

Given the dangers and uncertainties, after prayer and reflection, and in consultation with my brother bishops and priests and lay advisors, I have authorized certain precautions and accommodations related to the celebration of the Eucharist in our parishes. These measures are intended to lessen the risk that we will endanger our people or spread this illness during our worship.

I urge you to review these measures here. We have also established a page on our website, lacatholics.org/emergency to provide resources and updates on the coronavirus as it relates to our parishes, schools, and ministries. To receive updates, you can register online at <https://archla.flocknote.com/ADLAUpdates>, or you can text "ADLA" to "84576."

The celebration of the Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. But it is important to remember that our obligation to participate in the Mass is dispensed for grave causes.

Therefore, in this grave and extraordinary moment, I am dispensing all the Catholic faithful of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and all Catholics currently in the Archdiocese from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass for the weekends of March 14-15, March 21-22, and March 28-29.

I encourage those of you who cannot come to Mass, to stay home and read the Gospels, pray with your families, and to join yourself to the sacrifice of the Mass by making an act of spiritual communion. There are a number of prayers of spiritual communion that you can use, the one I like is simple: "I wish, my Lord, to receive you with the purity, humility, and devotion with which your most holy mother received you, with the spirit and fervor of the saints."

I also encourage you to participate in the Holy Mass via the Internet. A livestream of the Mass is broadcast from the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels each Sunday. You can watch live on the LA Catholics Facebook Page (facebook.com/lacatholics/) or visit lacatholics.org/emergency/. The English Mass is celebrated at 10 am and the Spanish Mass is celebrated at 12:30 pm.

There are also several other parishes in the Archdiocese that provide livestreams of their Masses over the Internet or social media. You can find a listing of those and links to their livestreams at lacatholics.org/emergency/. We are also arranging to have daily Mass livestreamed, as well; please check our website for updates.

In this time of trial, I entrust us all to the maternal care and intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe. I invite you to join me in praying the prayer below, which is composed especially for this moment.

May God be gracious to us, and make his face shine upon us. And may he grant us peace,

Most Reverend José H. Gomez

Archbishop of Los Angeles