



April 23, 2020

Dear Friend of Carmel Mission,

I hope this finds you and your loved ones safe and in good health. It is hard to believe that it has been nearly six weeks since Monterey County issued its Shelter in Place Order, and Bishop Danny Garcia suspended the public celebration of Mass in the Diocese of Monterey. I am taking this opportunity to provide you with an update on activities at our Carmel Mission Basilica Parish.

As soon as we sensed that our closure was sadly inevitable, we began working to address this new reality. One of our principal goals was to maintain our connection with you and to continue to create community through new “virtual” platforms. We expanded and restructured our website, began to stream our weekend masses, and to offer daily prayer messages to keep you connected with your beautiful Basilica and with one another. We have been amazed at the speed of growth in our virtual community, with over 1000 views of our Easter Sunday streaming Mass. Many of you have responded to the Masses and the Daily Prayers by sending Fr. Rodrigo and myself your Prayer Requests via our website, so that we may remain connected with you.

We have joined the social media platforms of FaceBook, Instagram and Youtube, and are happy that so many of you are connecting with us there as well. We have been in touch with our ministry leaders via conference call and our ministries have continued to do their important work, as is possible within current restrictions. In particular, our I-Help and Falge Farm Worker ministries continue their efforts to serve and support the most vulnerable in our communities. We are most grateful to the Knights of Columbus and the Knights of Malta for their ongoing support of our many ministries. I also want to express my great appreciation for the efforts of our Faith Formation team who continue to connect with our young people and with the adults in our RCIA program.

All of this is made possible by your generous support. I am profoundly grateful to all of you who have changed to electronic giving which makes it easier for us and hopefully for you also. Many of you choose to mail your offerings and it is a delight for us to open your envelopes. Please continue your generous giving as we no longer have our Mass collections and other regular forms of revenue. I am especially thankful to those who have been able to increase their support during our time of need, so that we may continue to serve you and keep our community vibrant and connected in these difficult times.

I also want to thank those of you who have continued to support our AMA campaign, “Heavenly Sounds.” I have received many complimentary comments about our streaming masses and the wonderful music that accompanies them. To hear Tiffany play our beautiful organ and the heavenly sound of Laura’s voice gave some people the sense of actually being present in our Basilica. Now more than ever, we realize how important it is to preserve this unique instrument for generations to come.



Our efforts in our streaming Masses have also brought to light some necessary improvements in our sound system, both inside and outside the Basilica.

As we look forward to the time we can once again gather as a worshipping community, we are already preparing for that day. Our return to worship at our Mission will require flexibility and creativity. While we do not know the exact date when this will be possible, we know that we will almost certainly need to be able to ensure continued social distancing for such celebrations to be safe and viable. As such, we are exploring how to use our space, not only the Basilica, but our courtyards and open areas to be able to safely welcome all who wish to join us. We are also considering practical liturgical guidelines so we can resume in a manner that safeguards the health of all. In addition, we are working to create the capacity to continue to stream our Mass online, even when public celebrations can resume, to reach those who are not able to attend in person. As we develop these ideas further, we will keep you informed, and I thank you in advance for your patience and flexibility as we continue to react and adjust to our new realities.

We are also working to open our Mission store online and we will be providing you with more information in the near future. I encourage you to support our store when online shopping becomes available.

In conclusion, I am happy to report that our faith community remains strong. I am grateful for your spirit of generous stewardship and that you have embraced our new "virtual" presence, have learned new ways to come together and support one another, and that you continue to pray and worship together. I am reminded of the life and mission of our founder and first pastor, St. Junipero Serra, who braved perilous journeys and encountered many adversities to continue to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in a New World. I am inspired by his example of courage, of creativity, and great optimism as we navigate these challenging times together.

I wish you and your loved ones blessings of good health, new hope, and profound peace,

Fr. Paul