



DIOCESE OF GALLUP

PO Box 1338
Gallup, New Mexico 87305

April 14, 2020

Dear Members of the Faithful and Clergy of the Diocese of Gallup,

Greetings of the Easter Season and the message of joy; Christ is risen. Alleluia! Physically we remain restrained in our physical activity by the restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, but, hopefully, not in our spiritual exercise. This is probably the toughest time in this ordeal; a time of patience, to wait for the actions we have taken to come to full effect. Any discipline is most difficult when do not feel or see the results we desire. It has been said that the most bitter pill of all is patience. Out of love for the well-being of others, we must continue the safe practices we have begun. There is victory in persistence. Our prayers will help us stay the course.

Guidance:

All previous directives from the Diocese regarding restraints due to the COVID-19 disease remain in effect as previously published. There is an adjustment for the region of the diocese in New Mexico. Governor Grisham on Saturday, April 11, 2020, issued an order to reduce public “mass gatherings” to five (5) with no exception for religious meetings. The previous order exempted religious activity, but the Diocese chose to comply with the Federal mandate for a maximum of 10 persons in any gathering. For full compliance with the recent New Mexico order, no church activity should exceed 5 persons in the same space. Since nearly all religious events are restricted, it only effects the remaining authorized activities: funerals, weddings, and private devotion in the church. The maximum number of people participating must be limited to five persons. The New Mexico official statements also strongly advised the wearing of face masks or shields when people must be out in public. The signs on the doors to the churches and chapels in New Mexico, if open for visitation, must state that “Only five (5) persons may be present at the same time.” The signs must also advise continued cautions to keep a physical distance of 6 feet between people and strongly encourage the use of face masks.

Reflection:

Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart.
Galatians 6:9 (Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition)

President Abraham Lincoln spoke the following words in his turbulent times: “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew.” That was the challenge then as it is now. When faced with an environment that has

changed, the answers of yesterday do not satisfy the questions of today. I encourage all the faithful and clergy to pray and look for new ways to support one another in the unity to which Christ calls us and continue to spread the Gospel, especially as we find opportunities to “do the Word” by our charity. Please work on communication and make maximum use of electronic media which can be a blessing in this time that was not available to those whose experienced serious plagues of the past. We must be proactive. Laity, please volunteer your expertise to aid your priests. Clergy, make yourselves available to coordinate the efforts of the faithful. We cannot go out with one another, but we can reach out in many ways. We can find those in need and help them. There are face masks to be sewn, phone calls to make, grocery trips to be driven for the elderly, and many more things God calls us to do in charity. There is also much need for prayer for the support of those afflicted with the virus and for the protection of those who care for them at their own risk. When we look back on this time when it is past, we do not want to remember most how we suffered, but rather how we loved each other. Love manifest in action turns defeat into victory and oppression into joy. Our Lord Jesus just demonstrated that message to us through our liturgies this past week as we followed him from the cross to Resurrection.

Prayer:

Most Merciful Father, raise our downcast eyes to see what you would have us see and to do what you would have us do in your name as we follow your Son with renewed vigor, to be His light to this world now plunged in darkness, fear and despair. Grant us the joy of knowing your will for our lives at this moment and the courage and fortitude to go where you lead us.

+Amen.

St. Mary Magdalene pray for us.

Invoking God’s grace on all,

+James Sean Wall

Bishop of Gallup