



25 March 2020.

My Dear Parishioners,

Peace be with you. I wish all of you a happy feast day of the Annunciation that we just celebrated. Yesterday we heard of the extension of the Movement Control Order (MCO) to the 14th of April. As such there will be no celebrations for Holy Week and Easter in our Church. A very sad moment for the entire Universal Church as Easter reigns supreme of all liturgical celebrations. We have no choice but to lockdown the Church in the midst of this pandemic for the safety of all parishioners. I know that many of you have gotten used to following the Sunday masses through live-streaming and live-telecasts.

Let us draw consolation from the feast of the Annunciation that we celebrated. First of all, God's love for Mary. The Annunciation is a beautiful revelation of God's love for Mary and for all of us from all eternity. God wants to be with us. "Do not be afraid," the Angel said, "for you have found favor with God." God has a mission for Mary and Mary submits to the will of God totally.

With Mary's yes, God's plan of salvation comes to completion in the Incarnation. God becomes one with us in the flesh. His name is Emmanuel. God with us, now and forever. "Do not be afraid," these words are also for us today. We have received the Body of Christ through the Eucharist and have become the Body of Christ, the presence of Christ as a community. Every family must celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus in their own unique and creative way because of social distancing this Easter. I suggest that you carry out the washing of feet on Holy Thursday. Spend time in this ritual to thank each other and ask for forgiveness from each member as you wash their feet.

Love casts out fear. Let us not be afraid of this pandemic that has challenged our faith and "paralyzed" the country. Over the centuries the Church experienced so much persecution, plagues, betrayals, wars and deaths. The Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone (Ephesian 2:20). That means that Christ began his Church and nothing can ever destroy it. No lockdown or virus will ruin our faith and trust in God. In moments like this we must persevere in prayer and fasting to seek God's help to end this crisis. Lent and Holy Week present us the best opportunity for this.

I do miss celebrating Eucharist, celebrating the sacraments, preaching, teaching and singing with all of you. Our daily life has been affected by the MCO. However it has given us more precious time to spend with God in solitude and prayer, and to be present to our families and loved ones.

All of you are in our daily masses and prayers. We pray for your intentions, safety and spiritual wellbeing every day. Please remember our Elect who are preparing for baptism. Everything will have to be rescheduled and I know that God is journeying with us each step of the way. If you need any assistance and if the priests are not available, please contact your BEC leaders.

All of us in the Redemptorist community take this opportunity to wish all of you a blessed and prayerful Holy Week. Thank you for your prayers and support. Thank you for making sure we have enough to eat and for loving and caring for us. May Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help continue to pray with us and for us.

I look forward to celebrating the Eucharist with you once again soon. In the meantime, stay safe and wash your hands.

In the Redeemer,
Patrick Massang C.Ss.R
Parish Priest OMPH