



Memo from the Bishop

Number 62 ✕ July 14, 2020

NAPA / SONOMA: As I mentioned yesterday the Governor has closed down all indoor gatherings for Sonoma and Napa counties. There are clear signs that Lake and Mendocino may not be far behind. It is possible that new closures could be announced by these counties or by the Governor adding counties to the restriction list. As I noted in my email, the link for the Governor's Guidance is: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Guidance-of-Closure-of-Sectors-in-Response-to-COVID-19.aspx>

LIVE-STREAM MASSES (SONOMA / NAPA): I am presuming that the present restriction of indoor worship takes us back to the Guidance issued for places of worship PRIOR to the allowance of a maximum of 100 people. Thus, just like before the brief expansion, the number of people at Live-Stream Masses should be limited to only necessary personnel. In general, 10 or 12 would be the maximum. Since the Governor has prohibited singing when there is a congregation, I will try to find out from the California Catholic Conference if the restriction on singing applies to Live-Stream Masses. My sense is that it does not but I will seek clarification.

OUTDOOR MASSES: Celebrating Masses outside, in accord with the protocols previously published, is permitted in Sonoma and Napa counties. Outdoor Masses continue to be an option for the other counties even though indoor Masses are still permitted. Masks should be worn.

SINGING AT MASS: The Statewide restriction on singing indoors remains in place for the whole State. While the Guidance does not mention outdoor singing, it is highly recommended (by the Diocese) that even if services are held outdoors any singing should be restricted to chanting by one or two persons.

DIOCESAN PROTOCOLS: These are very trying times and it is most important for ALL PARISHES and PRIESTS to observe diligently the protocols which I have sent out. A failure, in a substantial way, to observe them will force me to CLOSE OPERATIONS in any Parish where there is a serious violation of these protocols. Fathers, protect your people, protect your Church, serve them but be conscientious about the established protocols.

FUTURE UPDATES: In the event that other counties are added to the State list or that individual counties issue their own stricter Guidance, I will try to update you. Since I may not always hear about all of these, please, if you have additional information, make sure that this is transmitted to me so that I can make it available to the whole Diocese. Also, please, assure that those in your own county are made aware of any changes or updates.

CHALLENGING TIMES: The present 'roll-back' is both distressing and discouraging. Maintaining a positive and hopeful attitude, especially for the 'regulars' at Mass, is a necessary mode of service to them. I recognize that some parishioners are 'pushing' you to do more but if you follow their advice instead of my guidance then you put yourself and your parish, indeed, the reputation of the Church, at risk. Please do not attempt to by-pass or side-step the State or county restrictions.

AGAIN, PERSEVERE!