



# *Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church*

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March 20, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Our Lady of Fatima,

The past two weeks have been a real trial for all of us as we respond to the reality of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and its threat to public health and to the precious gift of life itself. Our lives have been changing almost daily as an ever more aggressive response to the virus has become necessary. Store shelves are empty of basic necessities, health care facilities are stretched to their limits, retirement “nest eggs” have been devastated by a declining stock market, and now – with restaurants and bars closed – you can’t even get a good meal and a cold beer! Perhaps the hardest thing for many of us was the decision to suspend public Masses and being unable to receive the Holy Eucharist. I had never imagined that such a day would ever come.

With this comes uncertainty, and with uncertainty comes fear. But in the face of this fear, I call to mind two passages from Scripture, though I am sure there are many more that are equally appropriate. In Romans 5:5, Saint Paul wrote: “Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” This is a verse that I have often included in funeral homilies, for it reminds us of the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, even at the darkest moments of our lives. I am also encouraged by the words of Saint Paul in Philippians 4:13 where he wrote: “In Christ, who is the source of my strength, I have strength for all things.” We are all in this crisis together, and together, we shall persevere.

Until the Churches can allow for public Masses again, Archbishop John Wester has dispensed the faithful from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Although the celebration of public Masses has been temporarily suspended in order to lessen the possibility of contagion, Fr. Chris and I each continue to celebrate a private Mass daily which we offer for the intentions of our parishioners and the specific Mass intentions that had previously been scheduled for that day. You may continue to call the parish office to make your requests for Mass intentions. Because of the limitation on the size of public gatherings, it has been necessary to re-schedule a wedding and an anniversary celebration. Some parishes have also found it necessary to postpone funeral services. First Communion and Confirmation will likely be delayed. Although Fr. Chris and I cannot make normal visits to nursing homes and to the homebound, we will respond to calls for Last Rites for those parishioners who are in immediate danger of death. We are considering alternative means to having Confessions in the Confessional, perhaps outside in the parking lot if weather permits.

The parish office will be closed during this period, but you may call by phone for updates or with any concerns. You may also check the parish website - [www.fatimachurchabq.org](http://www.fatimachurchabq.org) – for updates. You may also send email to us at: [OLOFatima\\_abq9@archdiosf.org](mailto:OLOFatima_abq9@archdiosf.org). The United States Post Office is still delivering regular mail, as well.



Like the public schools, Our Lady of Fatima School is temporarily closed during this health crisis, but our teachers are maintaining contact with their students via telephone and the internet so that we can do our best to facilitate their continued learning. All parish meetings and ministries have likewise been suspended, all in the interest of protecting public health. The purpose is to reduce the amount of interpersonal contact and thus reduce the possibility of infection from the Coronavirus.

Parishioners are encouraged to maintain their prayer life, and either listen to Mass on Relevant Radio 98.9 FM (Mass at 8:00 am on Sundays and 6:30 pm weekdays), or watch Mass on television or on their computer/tablet/smartphone. We are posting a recording of Sunday Mass from Our Lady of Fatima on the Online Mass page of our parish website, [www.fatimachurchabq.org](http://www.fatimachurchabq.org). Sunday Mass from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe may be seen Sunday mornings at 6:30 am on KRQE 13.2, KBIM 10.2, KREZ 6.2, KASY MY50TV, Comcast and Dish Network – 2, and Direct TV – 16. Daily Mass with Bishop Robert Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, appears on the Online Mass page of the parish website, and Fr. Chris is recording his celebration of daily Mass here at Our Lady of Fatima and posting it on his own Facebook page. Parishioners also have access to a large amount of Catholic media on Formed.org (please see details in the parish bulletin). You will not be able to sacramentally receive Holy Communion while watching a televised Mass, however you may offer the following Act of Spiritual Communion that was recommended by St. Alphonsus Liguori:

*My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.*

During this period of national crisis, I encourage all parishioners to continue to make your tithing contributions to the parish. We continue to have ongoing bills to pay, as well as payroll for the parish employees who are maintaining our facilities so they will be ready for you when the crisis subsides. You may mail in your offertory envelopes to the parish office. I am also working to set us up online giving for those who wish to use that service.

We intend to keep issuing a weekly bulletin that will be posted on the parish website to keep you informed. For those members of Our Lady of Fatima Parish who do not have access to a computer, you may request to have the bulletin mailed to your home. Simply call or write to the parish office and we will add you to the mail out list. This is offered only to registered parishioners.

These are all extraordinary measures for what are surely extraordinary times, and they are taken with the intention of safeguarding human health and life, while also maintaining contact with you – our parishioners. Please be assured that parish and school services will resume as soon as it is deemed safe to do so, and be assured of my prayers for you and your loved ones. May God bless you and keep you safe, and let us pray for one another. As our parish sign says: “Keep calm, and pray a Hail Mary!”

Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Stephen Schultz*

Very Rev. Stephen Schultz  
Pastor