

Dear Friends and Parishioners of St. John's,

As most of you already know, the County of San Diego has been moved into the so-called "Purple Tier" due to higher positive Covid testing rates. As a result, Bishop McElroy has instructed us to cease indoor Masses with a congregation for at least the next three weeks. Here is the announcement from the Diocese' website:

*San Diego County moved to the purple tier on Nov. 10 under the California governance framework regarding Covid-19. According to public health authorities, Covid-19 cases in San Diego County are growing rapidly and have again reached dangerous levels. Therefore, effective Saturday, Nov. 14, and for at least the next three weeks, the indoor celebration of Mass will be suspended and all Masses will be moved outdoors with appropriate social distancing and masks required.*

*With respect to funerals and weddings, the diocese is asking the County for clarification and will provide guidance as soon as possible.*

*The religious activities at parishes and the diocese are still considered essential services and for this reason may continue while observing Covid-19 measures that are intended to protect public health and promote the common good.*

*Many parishes will continue to livestream Masses on a daily basis through their websites or social media, giving the faithful another option to stay connected to their faith.*

*The universal dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass continues throughout the diocese....*

*Though indoor Masses are temporarily suspended, the diocese and parish offices remain open to serve our Catholic community. The diocese's Catholic schools in San Diego County also remain open for in-person and online instruction.*

*Bishop McElroy knows the frequent changes during the pandemic have been very hard on our Catholic community, but he also believes our Faith will sustain us:*

*"In this moment of our lives, when times are tough, it is then that God especially comes to us, embraces us and carries us through."*

At this point, I'd like to offer my profound thanks to all of you who have weathered this crisis and kept your faith. To date all of you have done an impeccable, magnificent job of maintaining a healthy environment in the church. There have been no, not one, instances of Covid infection in this parish to my knowledge and that is a testament to your actions.

If you are like me, it is easy to feel unsettled by these constant, arbitrary, and unnecessary changes in our worship. To this I say, please keep the Faith and support one another in prayer and fellowship. Please continue to check in on your fellow parishioners to make sure they are doing well.

One of the side effects to all these lock downs is a tremendous increase in despair, anxiety, and mental illness, all exasperated by the forced isolation and loss of our jobs and businesses. So please, make sure to support one another and reach out to one another as best you can. We all need the human touch and no member of our parish should feel alone.

Finally, and to sum up, our schedule this week is the same as usual. Masses will be outdoors (dress accordingly) except the 8:00 am Sunday which will be livestreamed. Every other ministry will continue as before. Religious education, school, parish office hours, Adoration, Confession, etc. are at their regular time and in their regular places.

May God bless you,  
Father Jim

*"Who is going to save our Church? Not our bishops, not our priests and religious. It is up to you, the people. You have the minds, the eyes, and the ears to save the Church. Your mission is to see that your priests act like priests, your bishops act like bishops, and your religious act like religious". – Fulton J. Sheen*

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