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March 17, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us always!

We have completed our first weekend since the suspension of public Masses, all services, faith formation and large gatherings in our churches for the common good. I know this is difficult for all of us. I want to thank you for your cooperation and patience as we do everything we can to protect one another. I also want to thank you for your care of yourself, your family, and all your brothers and sisters; that you are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to help keep everyone safe and healthy.

This is a very serious health emergency. We have seen what this virus has done in Italy, China, South Korea, and other countries. We, together with other churches, municipalities, boroughs, the State of Alaska and the federal government are taking serious preventative measures to try to contain and slow this virus as it can be deadly, especially for our most vulnerable people. We are trying to get ahead of the virus here in Alaska. At the same time, it is important that we do not panic, but that we place our trust in God. Let us not give in to fear, but remain hopeful and positive, for ourselves and for others, trusting in God's care.

No one is happy that the suspension of public Masses and other measures are in place, including me, but this is necessary and an act of trust in God and love of neighbor. God is speaking to us in many ways today through doctors, health care providers, the Center for Disease Control, our Governor, elected officials, and members of school districts, among others. We need to listen to all of these voices and trust that God is speaking to us through them.

Even with the suspensions and [social distancing](#), we remain the people of God in prayer and communion. I encourage each of us to continue our private prayer and prayer with the family. During this time, I respectfully request every Catholic to [pray the rosary daily](#). We pray through the intercession of our Blessed Mother that those who are suffering in this current outbreak of sickness might be healed and that those who have died in recent weeks will rest in peace. We also pray that their families will be comforted and that our faith will be strengthened.

In addition to praying the rosary, as the people of God united in prayer, I recommend the following for your consideration:

- Pray throughout the day, especially when we feel anxious. The signature from the [Divine Mercy](#) is easy to remember. You can use it as a prayer - "Jesus, I trust in you."
- Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day (Sunday) through prayer and scripture reading.
- Watch available streamed and posted Masses on the diocesan websites, parish websites, the internet, and television.
- Make an act of spiritual communion when it is not possible to receive Holy Communion in person. *"My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen."*
- Read the [scriptures for daily Mass](#) and meditate upon them.

- Pray for our doctors, nurses, healthcare professionals, researchers, first responders, and all those who put their lives on the line to treat, comfort, and protect us.
- [Pray the prayer from Archbishop José H. Gomez](#), president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). In this time of need, Archbishop Gomez invites all the faithful to seek together the maternal intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The prayer is attached to this letter.

Although for now we must maintain social distancing of at least six feet, we can and need to stay connected as a faith community. Just about everyone has a smart phone and/or computer, which are welcome alternatives to physical presence in these difficult times. There are things we can do to stay connected and support the common good:

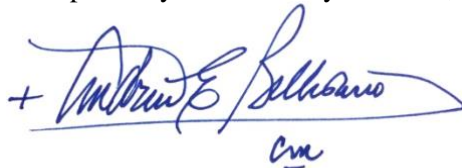
- Phone calls, texts, emails, social media messaging, video chats, etc.
- Check on your neighbor by calling them.
- Avoid panic buying of essential products.
- Share what you have with your neighbor and those in need.
- Avoid unnecessary travel.
- Wash your hands, practice social distancing and do not put vulnerable people at risk.

[Catholic Social Services](#) (907-222-7300) and the [Society of Saint Vincent de Paul](#) help the most vulnerable among us. They have great challenges to continue their ministry and assistance to the homeless, elderly, and persons who are poor. Please consider contributing to these Catholic organizations by calling them or clicking on the links above.

I have no doubt that our faith community is strong and that we can weather this health crisis together. There may be more challenges that will require us to make sacrifices for the common good. When we once again celebrate the Eucharist together, we shall have an even deeper appreciation of God's great love for us. *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.* (John 3:16)

As we know, the situation in our country changes daily – sometimes hourly. I will keep you up to date with any developments in regard to our Church.

Respectfully and sincerely in Christ,



Bishop Andrew Bellisario, C.M.  
Apostolic Administrator

**Attachments:**

Prayer of Archbishop Gomez  
Instructions on how to pray the rosary

**Websites:**

Anchorage: [archdioceseofanchorage.org](http://archdioceseofanchorage.org)  
[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: usccb.org](http://United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: usccb.org)

**Social Media Sites:**

[Facebook](#)  
[Twitter](#)  
[Instagram](#)

## USCCB PRESIDENT'S PRAYER DURING CORONAVIRUS

HOLY VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE,  
QUEEN OF THE ANGELS AND MOTHER OF THE AMERICAS.  
WE FLY TO YOU TODAY AS YOUR BELOVED CHILDREN.  
WE ASK YOU TO INTERCEDE FOR US WITH YOUR SON,  
AS YOU DID AT THE WEDDING IN CANA.

PRAY FOR US, LOVING MOTHER,  
AND GAIN FOR OUR NATION AND WORLD,  
AND FOR ALL OUR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES,  
THE PROTECTION OF YOUR HOLY ANGELS,  
THAT WE MAY BE SPARED THE WORST OF THIS ILLNESS.

FOR THOSE ALREADY AFFLICTED,  
WE ASK YOU TO OBTAIN THE GRACE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE.  
HEAR THE CRIES OF THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE AND FEARFUL,  
WIPE AWAY THEIR TEARS AND HELP THEM TO TRUST.

IN THIS TIME OF TRIAL AND TESTING,  
TEACH ALL OF US IN THE CHURCH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER  
AND TO BE PATIENT AND KIND.  
HELP US TO BRING THE PEACE OF JESUS TO OUR LAND AND TO OUR HEARTS.

WE COME TO YOU WITH CONFIDENCE,  
KNOWING THAT YOU TRULY ARE OUR COMPASSIONATE MOTHER,  
HEALTH OF THE SICK AND CAUSE OF OUR JOY.

SHELTER US UNDER THE MANTLE OF YOUR PROTECTION,  
KEEP US IN THE EMBRACE OF YOUR ARMS,  
HELP US ALWAYS TO KNOW THE LOVE OF YOUR SON, JESUS. AMEN.

## HOW TO PRAY THE ROSARY

The Rosary is a Scripture-based prayer. It begins with the **Apostles' Creed**, which summarizes the great mysteries of the Catholic faith. The **Our Father**, which introduces each mystery, is from the Gospels. The first part of the **Hail Mary** are the angel's words announcing Christ's birth and Elizabeth's greeting to Mary. St. Pius V officially added the second part of the **Hail Mary**. The Mysteries of the Rosary center on the events of Christ's life. There are four sets of Mysteries: Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and — added by Saint John Paul II in 2002—the Luminous.

The repetition in the Rosary is meant to lead one into restful and contemplative prayer related to each Mystery. The gentle repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts, where Christ's spirit dwells. The Rosary can be said privately or with a group.

The **Five Joyful Mysteries** are traditionally prayed on Mondays, Saturdays, and, during the season of Advent, on Sundays:

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Nativity
4. The Presentation in the Temple
5. The Finding in the Temple

The **Five Sorrowful Mysteries** are traditionally prayed on Tuesdays, Fridays, and, during the season of Lent, on Sundays:

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion and Death

The **Five Glorious Mysteries** are traditionally prayed on Wednesdays and, outside the seasons of Advent and Lent, on Sundays:

1. The Resurrection
2. The Ascension
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit
4. The Assumption
5. The Coronation of Mary

The **Five Luminous Mysteries** are traditionally prayed on Thursdays:

1. The Baptism of Christ in the Jordan
2. The Wedding Feast at Cana
3. Jesus' Proclamation of the Coming of the Kingdom of God
4. The Transfiguration
5. The Institution of the Eucharist



## PRAYING THE ROSARY

Familiarize yourself and/or your group with the [prayers of the rosary](#).

1. Make the Sign of the Cross.
2. Holding the Crucifix, say the **Apostles' Creed**.
3. On the first bead, say an **Our Father**.
4. Say one **Hail Mary** on each of the next three beads.
5. Say the **Glory Be**
6. For each of the five decades, announce the Mystery (perhaps followed by a brief reading from Scripture) then say the **Our Father**.
7. While fingering each of the ten beads of the decade, next say ten **Hail Marys** while meditating on the Mystery. Then say a **Glory Be**.
8. (After finishing each decade, some say the following prayer requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima: **O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who have most need of your mercy.**)
9. After saying the five decades, say the **Hail, Holy Queen**, followed by this dialogue and prayer:

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

**Let us pray: O God, whose Only Begotten Son, by his life, Death, and Resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech thee, that while meditating on these mysteries of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.**

(A [prayer to St. Joseph](#) may also follow.) Conclude the Rosary with the Sign of the Cross.