

A MESSAGE FROM *Father Manny*

DEAR PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS OF SAINT MARY OF THE LAKE AND OUR LADY OF LOURDES,

After several parish information sessions for all parishioners regarding the future of Our Lady of Lourdes Church on December 3, 2023, the Parish Discernment Team met on December 9, 2023 to determine the best path forward. After much prayer, serious discernment and thoughtful dialogue, the Parish Discernment Team made the recommendation to the Multisite Review Team to end regular Sunday worship at the Our Lady of Lourdes Church on May 19, 2024. We have received word that this recommendation has been accepted by the Archdiocesan Multisite Review Senior Leadership team and will be reviewed by the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council in March 2024.

This is a very difficult moment in the life of our parish. We understand that this decision will cause hurt, sadness, anger and confusion. I ask that we hold in prayer all the current and former parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes Church who will be affected by the closure.

As your Pastor, it is my responsibility to look after the spiritual well-being of all parishioners who worship at both sites. This responsibility does not end when a site closes. I have asked the Parish Discernment Team to come up with ways we can help those who currently worship at the Our Lady of Lourdes Church to remain connected to the Church beyond May 19. Some ideas



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beginning to emerge include adding a few more masses at the Saint Mary of the Lake Site and getting a church van to pick up seniors on Sunday at their homes to bring them to Mass. How these suggestions will be acted upon has yet to be determined.

While I would hope to have all current parishioners who worship at Our Lady of Lourdes join parishioners at the Saint Mary of the Lake site, I know that this is not realistic for some. Our staff will work with every family to identify the best way to stay connected to the life of the Church even if it is not at Saint Mary's. We will also be open to meeting and praying with people individually who will be affected by this loss. While this moment of pain and disappointment is challenging, I invite you to join me in living this pain and disappointment together. I want to listen to you, walk with you, and discern together how the Mission of Our Lady of Lourdes Church can continue.

The life of a disciple and the mission that Jesus entrusted to His Church cannot end when a church building closes. While the days ahead will be difficult; we must do all we can to make sure we remain connected so that the Gospel of Jesus can continue to be preached and lived out in Ravenswood, Buena Park and Uptown. His mission of love, service and forgiveness must go on.

Let us stay close in faith and prayer as we walk this journey together.

Fr. Manny

