



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

December 12, 2020

Statement of Bishop Jaime Soto on the Threatening Surge of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The frustration aches deep down as Christmas approaches while we remain unable to gather in our churches and celebrate the coming of Christ as we have in every other year. I share the pain this causes for all of us.

Everyone wants to celebrate Mass indoors this Christmas. Every one of us wishes we could gather our families as we have for generations, hug our grandparents and grandchildren, and celebrate this holy time.

We simply cannot wish away the reality that the virus is surging in the state and throughout our communities. We cannot ignore the growing number of family and friends who are afflicted. Our hospitals are at risk of being overwhelmed. The compassionate mercy of God calls every one of us to do our part and make sacrifices to protect the old, the sick and the vulnerable.

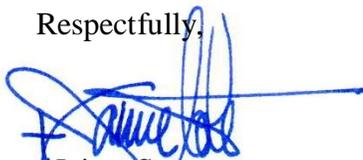
This Christmas we reverence the Lord Jesus who took upon himself the human condition by exercising the prudent and necessary disciplines that will stem the spread of this virus, protecting our family, friends and neighbors. This year, each of us can be a sacramental work of Christ's mercy by wearing a mask, keeping physical distance, attending Mass outdoors or online, and praying for those who are threatened by the virus as well as those who protect us from infection.

Mary and Joseph could not find in Bethlehem a place to receive and worship the Christ child. Still, they persevered, trusting in God's merciful providence. To this day, Christians follow the shepherds to find the King of Kings humbly huddled in a manger. Let not our disappointments keep us from finding him again amidst the unexpected tribulations of this Pandemic.

Every Advent we pray, "Come Lord Jesus" knowing not when and how He will come to us. With patience and humility may we find His tender mercy in the way we reverently safeguard one another during these trying times.

May the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary join with our prayers for God's mercy to end the pandemic, bring healing to the afflicted, protection and perseverance to those who care for them.

Respectfully,



†Jaime Soto
Bishop of Sacramento