



PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM RECTOR

**To all parishioners of St Simon Catholic Church Likas:
14 March 2020**

Dear brothers and sisters,

By now, we know it, and we feel it. The worst has happened with the COVID-19 pandemic: all Masses and parish gatherings have been suspended in our Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu effective today until 1 April 2020.

I beg you, let our response to the suspension be prayerful, humble, trusting and coming forth from a united community of faith. We trust that the Archbishop our Chief Shepherd has sought after the will of God and that he has made this most painful decision after consulting the appropriate and competent persons.

We accept it is for health and life, for the common good of ourselves and others and a critical contribution and sacrifice to Sabah, Malaysia, and the world faced with the COVID-19. We are here to help, not to add to greater and real risks to the common good of health and life that God has given.

While the deprivation especially of the inestimable value of Holy Mass and the sacraments is incalculable, we must believe that there is also a positive and perhaps much needed side to it in the providence of God who does not abandon us.

It is time to shake off some of our carelessness. It is time to feel the great importance of the sacraments, to appreciate them more deeply, to prepare ourselves more worthily.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder. Like Israel deprived of temple, priests and sacrifice, we are now in exile. But the Lord who has exiled us does so precisely to purify and strengthen His People to return to the Eucharist and sacraments, our Promised Land.

Having taken this positive attitude, we need to pray, and to pray more and more earnestly, not just for our needs but in support of each other so that we will resurrect from the suspension in newness of life.

We have already recommended some resources on the broadcast of the Holy Mass available in the internet, and given guidelines on how best to take part in the broadcasted Mass fruitfully. Whenever possible, please bring the whole family together to take part in the broadcast especially on Sundays.

We have no Mass, but the obligation to keep Sunday Holy, the Lord's day of his death and resurrection, always remains until He comes again.

The Chapel is always open daily from 6.30 am to 9 pm. Pay more visits to the Blessed Sacrament especially as a family. Keep an eye on our parish website and Facebook.

As your shepherd, I pledge to pray for you every day, and in my private Mass join your painful sacrifice to that of the Lord. May we gain in our pain!

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28)

Fr Cosmas Lee
Rector