18 March 2020

My dear friends of Old Mission San Luis Obispo,

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!*

Changes to our daily habits have become the “new” constant in our lives. Children are now learning from home; parents have had to adjust to working remotely from the family dining room table; small businesses are faced with the sad reality of laying-off employees; anxiety builds over questions of how to pay the monthly bills; and places of recreation and shopping have closed. These are challenging days.

The Psalms, or what we might call the “adult prayers”, may very well assist us in expressing ourselves. I am reminded of Psalm 86:

> Incline your ear, O Lord; answer me, for I am afflicted and poor.<br>Keep my life, for I am devoted to you;<br>save your servant who trusts in you.<br>You are my God;<br>have pity on my, O Lord, for to you I call all the day.<br>Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;<br>For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,<br>abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.<br>Hearken, O Lord, to my prayer<br>and attend to the sound of my pleading.<br>In the day of my distress I call upon you, for you will answer me.

Sisters and brothers, we are a people of faith even in the times of adversity. We believe that God is a God of life and of creation. We trust that God always hears us when we cry out to him and we believe that God will always answer our prayers as we *need* them to be answered (maybe not always as we want). And so, Psalm 86 reminds us to never be fearful of calling upon the Lord to hear our cry.

As you are already aware, following the directives of Bishop Garcia, there will be no public celebration of the Mass through Easter Sunday. It was our hope to keep the church open during
the day, but that is no longer a possibility. I encourage all of you to seek other forms of prayer and to celebrate spiritual communion. Father Gabriel and I will do our best to maintain contact with you through our parish website by recording our private daily Mass and/or written reflections.

We are now under the “Shelter in Home” instructions for San Luis Obispo County and so our parish offices are also closed until further notice. As frustrating as all of this can feel, especially during this time of Lent, maybe we can utilize these days of sacrifice to recognize that these precautions and steps being taken are meant to help one another. We are created as social beings and so are given a responsibility for caring for each other.

Again, I thank you in advance for your patience as we seek to do our best to serve those who have been entrusted to our spiritual care. I ask that you continue to check our parish Website (www.missionsanluisobispo.org) daily as we will post information and communications as quickly as we can. Please pray for our parish staff as we shall pray for you!

Peace, Good Health, and Blessings upon you all!

Fr. Kelly