My Dearest Benefactors,

We pray that this newsletter finds you safe and in good health.

I am Father Bob Chorey, Chancellor and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Reno and pastor of Our Lady of the Snows parish. I write to you today on behalf of Bishop Calvo whose time and energy has been focused primarily on guiding our diocese through a very challenging time. Nonetheless, he asked me to assure you of his continued prayers for you and his offering of Masses for your intentions.

Needless to say, these past months have been a trial for our diocese along with all other dioceses in the United States with the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to restrictions for the safety of our people, our diocese did not celebrate public masses for over 90 days. Recently, the restrictions have been eased and we can now have celebrations with up to 50 persons at a time.

Our parishes struggled to provide ministry and pastoral care during these months; many utilized social media to provide online masses and other services, including youth ministry and catechesis. In the end, many of the parishes were able to adjust to a social media environment for the short term to remain connected to the faithful.

One parish, in particular, was challenged, St. Peter Canisius parish. This parish is located in Sun Valley, just north of Reno. The community of St. Peter Canisius recently grew to be the largest parish in our diocese based on mass attendance. Before the pandemic, their average weekend mass attendance was over 3,700 people; for a church that seats maybe only 300 people. Many people would need to stand or remain outside during normal Sunday masses. Only three years ago there were around 1000 people per weekend. Their growth has been explosive! The parish serves a predominantly Latino population and their pastor, Fr. Edgar Villanueva, has been working with them for two years now and continues to grow and develop this parish.

They recognized a need to build a larger worship area and have begun that process. Then the Coronavirus hit. Fr. Edgar worked to provide online masses but was getting blocked on Facebook, had technical difficulties with YouTube, plus other challenges. Finally, a local news affiliate stepped in to help with recording and broadcasting masses. The number of social media views were into the thousands! Fr. Edgar also provided online catechesis for the parish through videos.
When restrictions were eased in June, the parish faced the challenge of how to serve all these people but only 50 at a time. The number of masses needed to accommodate the thousands in groups of 50. That number was too high for one priest to do. So the parish instituted a drive-in process. People can drive into the church parking lot, stay in their cars, and celebrate mass while Fr. Edgar presides from outside on an elevated makeshift altar. Communion is distributed in a safe manner, as parishioners drive up to receive the sacrament. It is not the best of solutions, but for the time being it works. The upcoming challenge with this will be that in Nevada the summers are HOT! So that means the cars will need to keep their engines running during mass to keep cool with the vehicle’s air conditioning.

Although, the parish will continue on its capital campaign to construct a larger worship space for the community. It will be a challenge given that the community is not wealthy, and with COVID-19 and the closure of many businesses, many of the parishioners have experienced their income being lost or diminished.

The spirit of the parish moves them forward. They have a goal and our diocese works with them to achieve that goal.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Robert W. Chorey
Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia
Roman Catholic Diocese of Reno

**MASS STIPENDS**

Through Mass Stipends, this voluntary offering, the donor seeks spiritual benefits that God may bestow upon the persons or concerns that are specially held in prayer at the Mass. Mass stipends are a means of providing support to our mission priests and parishes. The Ecclesiastical Province of San Francisco, of which we are a part, recommends the following:

+ A $5.00 stipend for Mass to be celebrated at a time left to the discretion of the priest.
+ A $10.00 stipend for a Mass to be celebrated on a specific date.

We will, however, continue to accept and distribute mass stipends in lesser amounts.