



## *Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus*

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Dear family and friends of the Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa Church,

"The church isn't empty. It's been deployed!"

If you're on social media, you may have seen or heard that phrase already. I love it because it captures the moment we're living in right now – empty churches, but active Catholics.

I know that this is a somber time. More than 96,276 people have died across the country. Here in Hawaii, we have 17 people who died because of the COVID-19 deadly virus. We've all been impacted either by the illness, or the quarantine or by the economic shutdown. It's been hard on everyone. I know it's been hard on you.

But while I mourn those who have died, and I sympathize with those who are suffering, I also feel a sense of incredible joy – maybe even a sense of relief – at the goodness that I'm seeing. Is that wrong? For me to feel joy right now? I hesitate even to write these words because I worry that people will take them the wrong way.

"Father," they'll say, "you can't be joyful when people are dying, and businesses are closing, and your parish budget has been blown to smithereens."

But you know what? I am joyful.

Because here's the secret: **this coronavirus pandemic has revealed what kind of people we are, and what kind of parish we have built here at the Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa Church.** And I see that we have something special here. For the past three months, I have witnessed the kind of love and sacrifice and care for others that proves, beyond a doubt, that our parishioners are followers of Jesus Christ.

These are busy days. And while social distancing makes it impossible, I wish you could spend an entire day with me and see what I see and hear. Every day brings a dozen new examples of God's love for us and examples of His hand at work here in our community.

- Men and women are checking in on their neighbors and helping to run errands and deliver groceries.
- Families are praying the Rosary at home and attending Mass together online.
- Volunteers are finding new ways to help the distribution of food from Food Bank, delivering care packages, or supporting us to keep things clean.
- Volunteers from the Vietnamese community helping to renovate our chapel, repainting the sacristy and installing new tiles to replace the old carpet.
- The inspiring story of Thomasine Aceves (see P.S. story below)

I bet you're nodding as you read those words because I think you've seen it too. You've seen families spending more time together. You've seen people coming together – praying together – and caring for one another, just like Jesus Christ called us to do. You're not alone in feeling that something important is taking place.

There's something special going on right now. I sense the Holy Spirit moving within our community, and I see the Catholic Church deployed for all the world to see. I feel the joy that I'm here to see it, and I'm proud that you're here with me.

**You're a part of CCST 'ohana, and you belong right here in our community. We are lucky to have you as part of our family.**

You have something special here. You have a family of believers who will pray for you, cheer for you, and lift you when you are down. Whatever comes your way, you're not alone. Our parish families are all in this together, and we have Jesus Christ lighting the way and the Holy Spirit to guide us.

But I am also joyful because we can now celebrate the Eucharist together as a community!

I am happy to tell you that the **CCST church will be officially open on Pentecost Sunday**. We have been preparing the church, and we will be sending you more information about the protocols to observe social distancing.

God bless you for all that you are doing.

You and your family are in my prayers, and I hope that I am in yours.

Gratefully in Christ,



Fr. Manny Hewe  
Pastor, CCST

**PS: Thomasine Aceves story**

It was Friday, May 1st, and I was made aware by Bernie Gora, our school principal, that one of the kindergarten children of St. Theresa School, Thomasine Aceves, did her humble way of responding to the uncertainties that many of us experience during our time due to the pandemic. Little Thomasine, whose school routine was sadly altered by COVID-19 pandemic, did something to connect herself with the school and her classmates. She had sewn several masks with the help of her parents to give for her classmates and STS teachers.

As I reflected on this kindness and thoughtfulness of Thomasine, I think she was not only thinking about how her classmates are doing. She's also concerned about their safety. She's showing us pure acts of love like St. Thérèse. Thomasine's parent delivered the masks she made to the school and hung the package on the doorknob and left the box outside the door. But sadly, they were stolen.

Although the masks that Thomasine had sewn were stolen, her pure act of kindness will never be stolen. It will multiply. Thank you, Thomasine! Thanks to your parents. CCST community is proud of you.

Please pray and support St. Theresa School.