

It's Not About You...It's About the Other

By Most Rev. James A. Tamayo, Bishop of the Diocese of Laredo

For half a year now, we have all been forced to battle the Coronavirus pandemic. Life, as we knew it, has undoubtedly been turned upside down. We have all been negatively affected – some of us more than others. The death toll across our communities throughout the Diocese of Laredo remains high. In the midst of the turmoil, there are still some individuals who are taking the pandemic lightly and not abiding by the precautionary measures set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and city officials.

There are some people who say, “I am strong. I’m not going to get COVID.” Others think, “Even if I get COVID, I will recover.” If this is your way of thought, I invite you to take a step back and see – don’t just look at, but really see – the people with whom you come into contact. **It’s not about you...it’s about the Other.** Do you have family members who are older or friends with underlying health conditions? Your friends and coworkers may be young and healthy; but if you unknowingly infect them, do you know if their family members are just as “strong”?

Choosing to wear a mask has nothing to do with how strong YOU are. It is about loving those around you enough to protect them – from your grandparents and older family members to your friends and coworkers. We are called to act out of love for others, and these times in which we are living is no different. God urges us “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” (John 13:34) We can show our love for others by acting with prudence and heeding the warnings provided by health and city officials.

Over the past few months, we have become keenly aware of the realization that God created each of us to be a responsible member in society. If we want to return to a more “normal” social way of living in the near future, we must evaluate whether our present way of life is going to help us achieve that goal or not. Are your actions today helping or hurting those around you? Are you driven by love for others during this time of the pandemic? **It’s not about you...it’s about the Other.**

Our doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals are working tirelessly to treat those who are sick. They are reportedly exhausted – not so much because of the little to no time off they have – but much more so because it is emotionally draining to lose patients to a disease that has no known cure. Many people have lost loved ones far too early and suddenly; and they are still in shock and disbelief that they didn’t even have a chance to say goodbye.

Put all politics aside, and see the pain and the suffering that is plaguing our communities. Commit today to take the right steps and make choices that will show others that you care about them and to help stop the spread of this pandemic. “And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:17) If you find yourself struggling to change your actions from “business as

usual” to practicing social distancing, wearing a face mask and washing your hands frequently, offer up your discomfort for someone who is sick or for the family who just lost a loved one to COVID-19. Remember, **it’s not about you...it’s about the Other.**