

**Bishop Walsh Encourages  
His People in Days of Trial**

The Trenton Sunday Times of Oct. 13th published an impelling message of faith, encouragement and sympathy from Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Walsh, D. D., to the citizens of the city and diocese of Trenton to help sustain them in these fearsome days of dread disease sweeping over the country. To Buffalo, N. Y., where he has spent the past few weeks, were witness of the generosity of time and service when any and every claim was made upon his sympathy, Bishop Walsh's words will have the weight of a proved unselfishness that never considered race or creed, only the need.

Also, it was written when Bishop Walsh was himself passing through anxious hours of a beloved brother's illness and which eventually proved fatal, yet his heart was none the less solicitous for the sorrows of others. The message follows:

"To the citizens of the city and diocese of Trenton: A mysterious lethal epidemic stalks in our midst and numbers thousands in its toll of human lives. Our civil and medical authorities are using every human scientific means within their power to arrest and banish this dreadful pestilence.

"We, a God-fearing, God-loving people, should now use supernatural means and raise up our minds to Almighty God and humbly beg Him with clean lips and confident hearts, in fervent daily prayer, to stay and destroy this invading plague in its present living victims, to forbid its continuation and to console all bereaved and saddened by its past ravages.

"I would respectfully suggest to the Catholic people that their prayer which may be offered by individuals or in family groups, include the Rosary and Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Litany of the Saints.

"All citizens of unafflicted homes can win the blessing of God and man by offering their services and goods privately or through civil and ecclesiastical agencies, to all in the throes of this new, vicious, mortal, malady. A generous and perfect observation in letter and spirit of all measures authorized by our civil health authorities is imperatively necessary.

"This communication is inspired by my conviction of duty to do all in my power to soften and shorten these days of tribulation.

"With cordial sympathy and profound condolence to all our citizens visited and made sorrowful by the terrible plague, soon to pass, I hope and pray, from our city, diocese, state and nation, I am,

"Yours sincerely in Christ,  
"THOMAS J. WALSH,  
"Bishop of Trenton."

04/09/20

One of the Lincoln Diocese's Priests gathered a few newspaper articles with messages from Bishops and Priests during the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic. These articles can help give some perspective that our ancestors went through similar experiences 100 years ago.

**Catholic Diocese of Delaware  
October 5, 1918**

**SUNDAY SCHOOLS  
AND ALL CHURCHES  
CLOSED TOMORROW**

In accordance with the order of the Board of Health, in its fight against the epidemic influenza, all churches and Sunday schools will be closed tomorrow, and all activities which would bring together assemblages will be postponed until further notice.

Bishop John J. Monaghan, of the Catholic diocese of Delaware, authorizes the following statement made by him to his people:

"Our reverend clergy and faithful people are earnestly exhorted to comply strictly with all the regulations of the Board of Health during the crisis through which we are now passing.

"The closing of our churches on Sunday is a serious privation, but under the circumstances the obligation of attending mass ceases, and we appeal to people to make up for it by private devotion in their homes, praying that God may soon remove from us all danger of the dread disease from which we are now suffering."

**For Catholics**

The Rt. Rev. Joseph Schrembs, Bishop of Toledo, has addressed the following letter to the Catholic clergy and Catholic faithful of the city and Diocese of Toledo.

"By order of the mayor and the commissioner of public health, all places of public gatherings, including our schools and churches, are closed during the prevalence of the present epidemic of influenza.

"It is our manifest duty to co-operate wholeheartedly with the public authorities in the measures adopted by them for the control of the epidemic and the safeguarding of public health.

"While doing all that human prudence dictates and scientific skill directs, we must not forget as men of faith that there is a God above us who permits and even sends afflictions for the chastening of our souls. Let us have recourse to Him in earnest, suppliant prayer, and implore His mercy. Religion has ever proven the one solid comfort and strength of the human heart in time of trial and danger.

"While the public worship in our churches has been suspended, the holy sacrifice of the mass will continue, of course, to be offered by the clergy, and the faithful are exhorted to unite themselves in spirit therewith and to supply as far as they may, through the holding of family devotions, for the default of public service.

"The very sense of loss that comes to us through the suspension of public worship will serve perhaps to bring home to us the beauty and the comfort and the spiritual consolation of our holy religion. Sometimes it is only when we lose a thing that we begin to appreciate its meaning and its

worth.

"A Catholic surgeon, who had been in the very midst of the din and carnage of battle for two months, working night and day with the wounded and the dying, rode into a small town on a bright Sunday morning during a lull in the operations, and came just in time to hear mass in a shell torn and wrecked chapel.

"I never knew," he wrote to a dear friend of his, "how sweet it would be to hear the Sanctus bell again, to see God's priest in vestments, to watch his hands uplifted, and to shut out the sight of grim-visaged war and dream of myself once more as a boy in the college chapel at home, with all my life before me and to thank my God with a full heart for the joy of mass again."

"Let every Catholic home then become a sanctuary of devotion during these days of spiritual privation. On Sundays, more especially, let all unite at the customary hour of divine service to recite at home the prayer of the mass in spiritual union with their priests, who will celebrate privately, and to read the epistle and gospel for the day with some approved commentary or instruction, or to recite the rosary and the Litany of the Saints.

"I hereby direct that the Catholic church bell be rung at the usual hours of divine service on Sundays for the purpose of reminding the faithful of their sacred obligation of sanctifying the Lord's day by special prayer and devotion.

"While we must do all that human prudence and counsel directs, let us humbly bow beneath God's chastening hand, and, acknowledging our own offenses and shortcomings, look up with perfect trust and unshaken confidence to God our Father.

"In sickness and in health, in life and in death, His Holy Will be done."

ROMAN CATHOLIC.

Rev. J. G. Cunningham, Sacred Heart Catholic—During this period, when the public health demands the suspension of ordinary Sunday services, it is earnestly desired that each person should bow in humble prayer on Sunday and beg Almighty God to grant not only cessation of this local scourge, but also a speedy victory to our arms, so that just and lasting peace may come soon to bless this war-scarred world.

Rev. Burchard Dietrich, St. Francis

AN ADDRESS TO CATHOLICS.  
By Rev. Father James E. Coyle, Pastor of St. Paul's Catholic Church.

My Dear Catholic Brethren:

A situation unprecedented in the history of our State presents itself to you today.

By order of the civil authorities, and by the advice of your religious leaders, you will not assemble, as you were wont to assemble on Sundays, in your various Catholic churches to assist at Holy Mass. That you may have some message on the Lord's Day, some words of uplift and cheer, The Birmingham News, with its wonted up-to-date-ness, has courteously invited me to write a few words for its many Catholic readers, and I am thus enabled to address, by means of the printed word, a congregation greater far than the five congregations that Sunday after Sunday gather at St. Paul's. I gratefully accept the courtesy of The News.

You are for the first time in your lives deprived of the opportunity of hearing Mass on Sunday, and you will, I trust from this very circumstance, appreciate more thoroughly what Holy Mass is for the Catholics. Sunday service is no mere gathering for prayer, no coming to a temple to join in hymns of praise to the Maker, or to listen to the words of a spiritual guide, pointing out the means whereby men may walk in righteousness and go forward on the narrow way that leads to life eternal. No, there is something else that draws the Catholics, to the wonderment of non-Catholics, from their warm homes on cold bleak Winter dawns to trample through snow-covered streets in their thousands and hundreds of thousands to a crowded church, where they kneel reverently absorbed in the contemplation of a man, who in a strange garb, at a lighted altar, genuflects and bows and performs strange actions and speaks in a long dead tongue. What draws the multitude?

The Mass, the unutterable sweetness of the Mass. Nothing human could draw, but the Mass is the God-given sacrifice offered the Creator, it is Holy Thursday come down and Calvary made present today. Mass is God really and truly present on our Catholic altars, a living unbloody victim offered again for the sins of men, offered, too, in thanksgiving for all the wondrous graces that unceasing flow from God's great mercy throne on high.

Yes, the Mass is the center of Catholic worship. It is the Mass that matters. Where the Mass is, there is God Himself, really, truly, though under sacramental veils. What a glorious history the history of the Mass! See it offered in the first centuries, in the catacombs over the bodies of martyrs by men who themselves will be martyred tomorrow. The Missionary leaving Rome for lands afar brings with him to sway the hearts of men, when the persuasive words of human wisdom fail, the Eucharistic God, made present in the Mass.

See, in Ireland an entire people kept true to Patrick's faith by the Mass. See Columbus and his men, kneeling at Mass on the early morn of the day, when they sailed away from Palos, to lift forever the mists from the Atlantic, and to win half a world for God. Ah, brethren, let us today reflect on the meaning and the history of that great sacrifice at which we may not assist, a sacrifice that links us with the saints and the sages of every age from Christ's time till now, and let us beg God in his mercy to remove from us that sickness that keeps us deprived of the great sacrifice, so that soon we may again with glad, worshipful hearts, meet in our churches and assist in offering to the All High that clean oblation, seen by the prophet Malachy in vision, that sacrifice that is offered in every place from the rising to the set of sun.