

SORRY. . .WE'RE CLOSED

Empty offices. Dark stores. Locked churches. Closed schools. Grounded airliners. Cancelled concerts. It's nationwide. And all because of a tiny viral bug we can't even see.

Have you soaked up sun on the beaches of Hawaii? A lot of us have. Right now we tourists are unwelcome on the islands. Times Square and Broadway theaters and sites like the Statue of Liberty have been favorite destinations for most of us. Not this week. Or this month. Or maybe even this year. Baseball stadiums in Dallas and Los Angeles and Seattle and other cities all across the U.S. today sit empty. No players. No fans. All because of the coronavirus invasion.

Here in the Texas panhandle we learned this week that our famous Palo Duro Canyon musical "Texas" had to be cancelled this summer. Cast selection and prep time have to happen during the months of spring, but that's not possible this year. For the first time in over half a century, the stage in the canyon will be dark and quiet this season. All of us who have loved this grand show hope the virus doesn't kill it permanently.

Last year Amarillo opened the most successful semi-pro baseball venue in the nation. Fans overflowed the Sod Poodles' new stadium night after night all summer long. Opening day this year came right when the virus arrived, however. Responsible caution delayed that first game. Weeks later we're still waiting. The crack of the bat and swirl of the stadium organ have not yet been heard this season.

Obviously, my remarks so far have focused on the new virus' impact close to my own home. I don't know enough to comment intelligently about how it is disrupting daily life in Italy or China or Bangladesh. But all of us who for the first time in our lives are seeing travel restrictions between many of our fifty states are feeling the curse of the virus.

The simple but wise words of the sweet Christian lady I buried this week seem to be a perfect response to all these virus closings. If she had heard us rehearsing our shock and dismay at these sudden eclipses of things we have always taken for granted, she would have told us (just as she often told her family), "This too shall pass." And our Lord, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, would say Amen.