

Dear Parish Family-

Last week I received my first dose of the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine and other than a sore bicep, similar to the flu shot, it was uneventful. A booster shot is necessary for full protection 28 days later. As it turned out Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI received his vaccine the same day! Pope Francis has been urging Catholics to abide by Catholic Social Teaching and get the Vaccine for the Common Good of all. Building herd immunity is important to protect the weak among us and is an act of charity and justice. I urge you to seek the vaccine when it is available. Once sufficient people, 70% of the population, have been vaccinated our lives will begin to return to a normal state again and won't that be a blessing!

The Diocesan Covid-19 Committee made recommendations to Bishop O'Connell and he accepted them. The next day the Holy See made further modifications. The Rites of Lent and Holy Week will be modified due to Covid-19.

Ash Wednesday we will have one Mass at 9am and several short services during the day, the schedule will be published closer to Lent. The Holy Father and our Bishop have asked pastors to stress that ashes are a custom and not a requirement nor an obligation. There is no pressing need to receive ashes especially during a pandemic. If you chose to come to a live in person service (all will be Live Streamed) the imposition of Ashes will take place at the very end whether Mass or a Service. The Priest will speak the invocation once only; he will impose ashes that have been made into slurry with Holy Water using a q-tip on the forehead, the q-tip will only be used once, one per person. You must leave immediately and may not linger or gather in any size group. Again, you are not required to receive ashes and those who are sick or in a high risk category should not attempt to come to Church on Ash Wednesday. The imposition of Ashes is a custom, not a sacrament.

Palm Sunday has also been shortened and modified, more on that when we get closer. Holy Thursday there will be no processions and no foot washing. Good Friday there will be no veneration of the Cross by touch, kiss, or any contact what-so-ever. Holy Saturday Blessing of Easter Food will be dependent on weather as we are not permitted to have it inside, it must be done outside, a decision will be made closer to Holy Saturday. I am thinking something along the lines of 'Trunk or Treat' style where you will have your basket in the trunk & you will pop the trunk open, you will stay in your car in a parking space distanced from others and we will use a PA system and then walk up and down the aisles to bless the food in your trunk.

During the Fridays of Lent there will be no soup and Stations of the Cross will be online. We will have a Confession schedule the same as we did for Christmas.

Easter regulations have not been formulated yet but we anticipate they will be modified.

Stay tuned as things are fluid but this year at least we will have some real time live devotions.

Due to Covid19 there are no Diocesan or Parish Buses scheduled for the March for Life, Bishop O'Connell invites the faithful to join him via Live Stream on Jan. 29 at 11am for Mass of Thanksgiving for the gift of human life.

The Novena to St. Joseph to end abortion is underway before each Mass from Jan. 14-22 and is available on our website.

Bishop O'Connell invites all Catholics of the Diocese to observe a day of prayer and fasting on Friday Jan. 22 the 48th Anniversary of the tragic Roe vs. Wade decision legalizing abortion. To Fast is to have only one full meal and two small snacks (which cannot equal together one full meal).

We welcome Dr. Karen Juliano, the new principal of Mother Seton Academy to our communities and the Academy and pray her tenure will be fruitful for our children and a blessing upon our faith communities of St. Aloysius and St. Veronica. Please pray for Dr. Juliano's success and for Fr. P.J. Alindogan (Pastor of St. Veronica) and Fr. John Chang (Parochial Vicar) who are in quarantine due to Covid-19.

Peace and Good – Fr. Bambrick