

Pastoral Letter January 2022

Level 3 of Winter Program for Global Pandemic

My Dear Parishioners,

For almost two years, we continue to battle a global pandemic. As we know this disease does not discriminate against race, creed, political persuasions, how we think or how we feel. It knows no boundaries and everyone is at risk.

Thank God scientists continue to study and monitor the dynamics of this disease that keeps changing into various variants that possess a real public threat. We continue to wear our masks; we sanitize and keep our distance from one another. We are all tired, especially those on the front lines who continue to risk their own lives to serve us. Our hospitals are overwhelmed with too many cases. Those who are awaiting surgeries have been 'bumped' or placed on hold indefinitely. Those of us who continue to move about in public could be putting others at risk without knowing it. Think of those whose health has been compromised by diabetes, breathing disorders, or cancer. But as well, it is not only our medical system that is at risk. Think of our men and women who serve us... the police, firefighters, government offices, and so on. There is so much at stake here.

Therefore, due to the rapid spread of omicron variant, our elected leadership for our province has moved into Level 3 of the Winter Covid Program to help keep us safe. **What does that mean for us as a parish? For two (2) weeks, there will be no Mass, Baptisms, Funerals, Adoration or any other type of public gathering. As well, both worship sites (St. Rose and St. Matthew's Churches), rectory, hall space and office (to the public) will be closed until Jan 30. However, the office will still receive your calls during normal office hours.**

Vaccinations continue to be our best line of defence. Those of us in the Catholic Tradition continue to follow and support our pope. **Our Holy Father, Francis** continues to encourage us to obtain our vaccines and to pay attention to scientists and the protocols in our area. Thankfully, many continue to do so. There are a very small percentage of people who are not able to receive vaccines due to previous health conditions. Unfortunately there are those who are not following this life saving advice or see these preventative measures as a 'gift from God.' For some unknown reason they continue to ignore science and the protection they offer and put others at risk. Instead of scoffing them, we pray for them.

For the next two weeks, we are encouraged to stay home to alleviate the risk of getting Covid or unknowingly spreading it around. It is my prayer that everyone,

especially those at Holy Spirit Parish, will heed the provincial guidelines, thus taking some pressure off an already strained medical structure. With that being said, I am asking everyone to postpone any type of gathering within our parish boundaries unless it can be done via phone conference or zoom. The key in all of this is to **STAY HOME**.

For two weeks, we can watch Mass for shut-ins from Toronto, or to join Mass in other parishes via Facebook. **For myself, I will join the Mass from one that is offered on television or live stream.** As well, I will take these two weeks and enter into a personal retreat. Each day, with my list of intentions, I will use the readings of the day and spend some much-needed quality time in prayer. I will bring to Jesus not only my own worries, discouragements, but as well, my hopes and dreams for our parish community and your intentions as well.

Finally, I will take this time for some much needed rest. Like many of you, the stress alone from this pandemic has taken a serious toll on my own well-being: mentally, physically and spiritually. Therefore, I invite you to do the same.

Two weeks closure is a small sacrifice to make for a greater gain of bringing life back to 'normal.' I am asking you to pray and support those who continue to care and protect us. Please be assured of my prayers for all of you as we address this disease in solidarity with one another and with Jesus, our Lord.

You may want to keep in Prayer....

- Those in different parts of the world who have Mass or received communion once a year.
- Those who are currently serving us.
- Those who are laid off or on stress/medical leave.
- Our Pandemic Team who serves us.
- What will our church look like after this pandemic?

Blessings,

Fr. David