



The Pastor's Heart Monday June 15 2020

Brothers and Sisters:

Grace and Peace to you in Jesus our Lord.

You are truly in my prayers every day. I know that these are uniquely challenging times, but, as is ever the case, great challenges provide even greater opportunities of grace. I pray that you are personally experiencing the closeness of God's presence yourself and in your household (even if your household is you with the angels and saints).

The last three weekends have been big celebrations: (1) Pentecost and receiving into our church family 14 catechumens and candidates (2) Trinity Sunday and Fr. David Pellican's first mass (3) The Feast of Corpus Christi and 14 young brothers and sisters receiving their first communion. Next week we have another 44 brothers and sisters receiving first communion at three different celebrations. Normally we would celebrate all these first communions together but our strict observance of social distancing limits the number of people we can have in church.

Sunday June 28 Fr. Jim will celebrate his last weekend mass with us. We are not able to do all the normal things we would do (like have a parish picnic) to say goodbye. Fr. Jim has been a great blessing to this parish and we will miss him. Pray for him. If possible, come to mass and say goodbye. And we hold in our hearts the intention to do more when times allow.

All the feedback I am getting (and I am getting quite a bit) about coming back to church has been positive. We have a great team of greeters and ushers. The last three weekends we have had overflow into the gym, where again, the feedback is that this is a positive experience and that it is good to be together. I know that some people who have been concerned about coming back on the weekend have come first to one of daily weekday masses (usually between 30 to 60 people). I recommend this approach as a gentle introduction to mass with masks, social distancing and no singing. These are new experiences but the most significant feeling is that it is very good to be together, especially if it has been months since we have been able to do so.

This Tuesday (later today, or tomorrow, depending on when you receive this) June 17 at 7pm is another Praise and Worship Event with our Worship Leader Santiago Fernandez. Our experience of worship is one of the most significant strengths of our parish community. Guests and visitors are constantly telling me this. Hundreds of people have found these evenings to be great times of inspiration and joy. I pray you can join us.

We did, in the last few weeks, a great teaching series called *Locked Down with Hope*. Deacon Bob Ervin, Dr. Janet Diaz, and Paco Gavrilides presented some wonderful teaching about how to prosper and find grace in challenging times. We may have been locked up but the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God was being poured out. I recommend you listen to these teachings. They are on our HolyFamilyNovi YouTube channel and can be accessed through our parish website.

Many people are not yet able to come to church. If you know these family members, church members, or friends would love to receive the Eucharist then you can bring it to them. If you have a pyx then you can use that. If you do not have a pyx then, before mass, ask a priest, deacon or liturgical leader to borrow one. Present it to the priest or Eucharistic Minister when you come up for communion. Bringing communion to the homebound can be a powerful experience for those who long for the Eucharist but have not been able to receive it. Simple instructions for taking communion to those at home are available in the gathering space.

We mailed out 1500 second notice reminders to update parish census information. 100 have been returned. Thank you to those who have responded. If we do not hear from you then we have no way of confirming that you want to continue to receive communications from the parish. Please help us know that we are not bothering you or wasting our resources.

On Wednesday June 17 I will be going up north on vacation for ten days. Please pray for me.

Your Pastor

Fr. Bob