



SACRED HEART CHURCH OF THE FIRST PEOPLES



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Facebook: Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples-Catholic Church

.....Baptism Preparation.....

The next Baptism Preparation Class will be on Thursday October 15, 2020 at 6: pm in the Parish Boardroom. Please register by calling the office at 780-422-3052

Mass Schedule

Daily Masses from Monday to Saturday at **9 a.m. (Live Stream)**

All Sundays at **10:00 am, 11:30 am** (Indigenous Mass) **4:00 pm** (Eritrean Mass) and **7:00 pm at Santa Maria Goretti Catholic Church** and Holy Rosary at **7:00 pm** (Live Streaming from our Facebook)

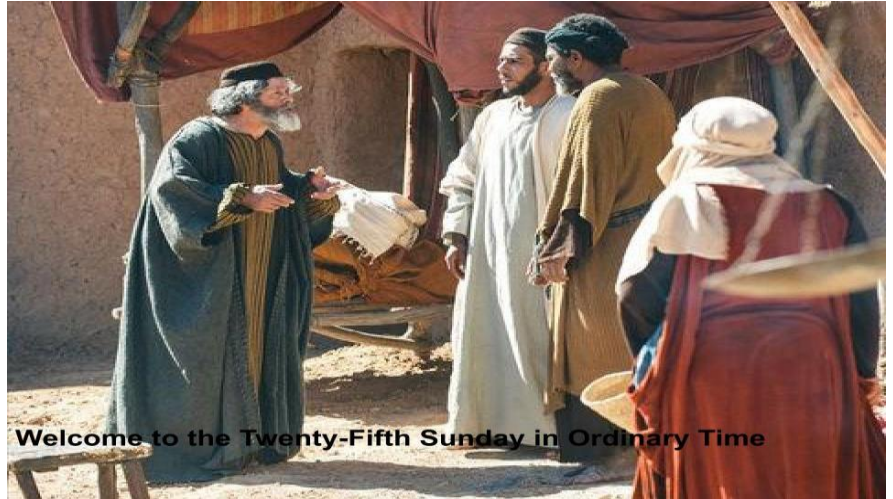
Prayers for the Deceased

Roland Rondeau

Baptisms

September 12:

Abigail Estifanos



Welcome to the Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Onocihtowipisim (September-Mating Month)

PRAYER/ REFLECTION

‘As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts’ says the Lord. Lord, open our minds and enlarge our hearts, so that we think more like you, and act more like you. Let us not begrudge your goodness to others, knowing that we too are undeserving of your favours, and stand more in need of your mercy than of your justice.

Weekly Collections

Church Offerings from September 13 to 18th 2020

\$ 2015.00, Church Building Fund **\$ 656.00** and Recyclables Cans and bottles **\$ 55.00**

Parish Team

Pastor: **Fr. Susai Jesu, OMI**

Associate Pastor: **Fr. Mark Blom, OMI**

Deacon: **Paul Tam**

A Pastoral Statement on the Impact of COVID-19 and the Call to Christian Renewal

“Save your people, O Lord, and bless your inheritance”

Dear faithful in Christ,

For the past several months, our Catholic community, together with all Canadians and indeed the whole world, has been seriously impacted by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). All of us – whether individuals, families, parishes, institutions or dioceses – have been required to make sacrifices, including many difficult but necessary decisions about matters at the very heart of our Catholic faith and way of life. As bishops, we acknowledge and are grateful for the way in which our Catholic faithful – clergy and laity alike – have lived the unprecedented circumstances of these months. We know, too, that the Lord allows all occasions – positive and negative – to teach and re-teach us lessons for right living in light of the Gospel. It is in this spirit that we address this letter to you as an invitation to consider along with us what the Lord may be saying to his people and his Church through this time of trial.

While the situation of COVID-19 continues to develop in our lives and communities, it is increasingly evident that the pandemic has had, and will continue to have some time to come, a far-reaching impact on all people throughout the world. In Canada, counting here in Alberta and the Northwest Territories, many human and social values have surfaced that, as Catholics among others, we will need to reflect upon as we consider the future of our life together in society, especially in the light of Christian revelation and our faith in Jesu Christ, our Redeemer. In particular, the pandemic has alerted us to a number of important social issues that touch us all including:

- The care of vulnerable persons in our society and supports offered to medical personnel in hospitals, nursing homes and other care facilities;
- The education of our young people and supports offered to families and to educators;
- Isolation and depression in our homes and communities, and the prevalence and stigma of mental illness, substance abuse, suicide and other social ills;
- Increased rates of domestic violence, elder abuse and other forms of interpersonal violence;
- Societal discord over different responses to COVID-19 that have fractured human relationships and challenged our call to love one another; incidents of racism, bigotry and religious intolerance, including in our towns and cities; anxieties caused by massive losses of employment and the general situation of economic instability;
- The fragility of our human condition and the basic needs we all have for safety, solidarity, and love within authentic human community.

At the same time, we have witnessed on a daily basis many heroic and selfless examples of individuals who exemplify true human goodness and charity. These are the so-called “saints who live next door” identified by Pope Francis as medical professionals, educators, parents and grandparents, shop workers, cleaners, communications and information technology specialists, law and order personnel, delivery drivers and so many volunteers in all sectors of our society. Whether motivated by faith or otherwise, young or old, these individuals are role models for all of us, demonstrating dedicated care and compassion that goes beyond duty to a level of human solidarity that is inspiring to others. We give thanks to God for raising up such generous human individuals who embrace this collective challenge as a way to witness to the enduring human and social values by which we need to live.

On this feast day when we contemplate Christ’s victory over death through the life-giving wood of the Cross, we, the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, invite you to reflect and discern with us the kind of response that will be needed to address some of the

human and social values that have surfaced during this pandemic. Specifically, we seek new ways to promote authentic human development and flourishing in the very way that we live, care for others, work, organize society and interact with one another. Moved by our faith in Christ and inspired by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, we invite the Catholic community to join us in looking afresh at certain aspects of our life together in society, to discern and decide a course for true social, cultural and spiritual renewal.

In the coming weeks, Grandin Media will be hosting a series of recorded panel discussions on various themes related to the pandemic and its challenging effects on our society. These sessions, featuring Catholic voices from around the province and territories, are meant to encourage our Catholic faithful to engage new questions and to take up new actions that reflect a “new normal” consistent with our life in Christ. Together with written texts, prepared by our bishops and released weekly, we shall present a series of reflections on the following topics:

- Reflection Topic #1: Inherent dignity of every human life
- Reflection Topic #2: Importance of the family
- Reflection Topic #3: Individual rights and social responsibilities
- Reflection Topic #4: Vulnerability and solidarity
- Reflection Topic #5: Responsibility for the common good
- Reflection Topic #6: Healthy use of information technologies
- Reflection Topic #7: Value and dignity of human work

We encourage all of our faithful to “tune in” to these sessions and take an active part in offering their own experience and wisdom on the topics presented. [An online mechanism will be available to receive your comments and feedback.] In this way, we hope to receive your insights into living our Christian faith in new ways in Catholic homes and in our communities, through our parishes, lay movements, schools and institutions, marked by hope, compassion and charity. Our Catholic faith has much to contribute with respect to promoting human, social and spiritual values for the common good of society. We trust that you, like us, see the urgency to discern wisely the signs of the times and to “reset” our lives so that our collective experience in moving forward accords with the Gospel. Guided by the Holy Spirit, and through the intercession of the most holy Mother of God, we are confident that this can be a time for bold creativity and life-giving transformation for all. We ask for God’s blessing on this endeavour and upon all who join with us in this journey of discernment and path of renewal.

Yours in Christ,

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT

Most Reverend Richard W. Smith

Archbishop of Edmonton

Most Reverend William McGrattan

Bishop of Calgary

Most Reverend Paul Terrio

Bishop of St. Paul

Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas CSsR

Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan

Most Reverend David Motiuk

Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of
Edmonton

Most Reverend Jon Hansen, CSsR

Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith.

Week 1

Inherent dignity of every human life

The situation of this pandemic invites us all to rediscover the inherent dignity of every human life and to re-awaken a sense of gratitude, affection and responsibility towards all people, particularly the most vulnerable in our society. A key insight to emerge out of the COVID-19 crisis is the necessity to pay close care and attention to our personal health and to the well-being of others. Washing hands, wearing personal protective equipment, keeping physical distance, sanitizing spaces, checking in on family members and neighbours, packing food parcels, tuning in to the latest reports from health officials – all of these measures were quickly adopted in order to safeguard the physical and mental well-being of ourselves and the people around us. At the same time, the virus has exposed certain frailties in the way that we, as a society, care for elderly persons, homeless individuals and other vulnerable populations, particularly within our healthcare and social service infrastructures. Systemic and chronic underfunding for long-term care and nursing homes, insufficient support for health care workers and facilities, inadequate or overcrowded housing in certain communities – all of these realities point to social situations and attitudes that erode human dignity and call for some measure of societal reform. What are some measures that you (and/or your family) have adopted to protect your personal health and the well-being of others during this time of COVID-19? Do you experience these as burdens or sacrifices? What questions or lessons has the pandemic surfaced for you about how we affirm the dignity of every human life in our Church? in society? In moving forward, what activities should our Church undertake to help shape a society where all human beings, especially our most vulnerable members, are loved, cared for, and respected?

Week 2

Importance of the family

COVID-19 invites us into a new appreciation of the family as the first and vital cell of our society. In a time of crisis, the presence and strength of the family is vital. During this pandemic, we have all witnessed examples of parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, nuclear families and extended families, connecting more intentionally with each other and learning to interact in new (and at times) heroic ways. For some, this has been a time to rediscover their parental role as the first educators of their children. For others, it has been a time to strengthen the priestly call of their baptism, inviting Jesus into the “domestic church” of their homes through creative times of prayer, such as celebrating Sunday by participation in a livestreamed Eucharistic celebration. For others, however, the pandemic has been a time of challenge and hardship in the family. On the one hand, the rules of physical distancing have meant, for some people, long separations from loved ones, accompanied by experiences of loneliness, anxiety and even despair, while, on the other,

the recommendation to live within a cohort (or bubble) of immediate family members and contacts has introduced certain challenges of its own. Compounding these internal family stresses, some families have faced unprecedented external pressures such as a sudden situation of unemployment or having to figure out a new strategy for childcare or education. The reported rise in child abuse and domestic violence in Alberta due to the pandemic is particularly troubling.

Questions for reflection

1. How has COVID-19 affected you in your family life? What have you valued most or least about your family through this experience?
2. What questions or lessons has the pandemic surfaced for you about the importance of promoting family life and how we care for families in our Church? in society?
3. In moving forward, what activities should our Church undertake to foster greater appreciation and support for families in our communities?

Week 3

Individual rights & social responsibilities

The limitations placed upon us during the time of the pandemic remind us that individual rights and freedoms are bound up inextricably with duties and responsibilities towards our neighbours and society in general. Ours is a society that highly values and pays close attention to individual rights and freedoms. As a result, we are quick to push back against authorities or structures that threaten to inhibit or restrict the personal liberties that we hold dear. We see this dynamic at play during a time of pandemic whenever we witness strong reactions toward public health measures and guidelines introduced for the common good. Finding the balance between our individual rights and freedoms, and our social responsibilities, sometimes requires us to consider and choose self-imposed limitations on our personal liberty for the good of everyone. In his homily for the Feast of Divine Mercy this year, Pope Francis cautioned that a more serious condition could arise in the post-COVID period if individuals and societies forget that the human person is essentially a social being. “The risk,” he warned, “is that we may then be struck by an even worse virus, that of selfish indifference. A virus spread by the thought that life is better if it is better for me, and that everything will be fine if it is fine [only] for me.”

Questions for Reflection

1. Which individual rights promote authentic human dignity and are most important to you? What are some of the social responsibilities associated with those rights?
2. What questions or lessons has the pandemic surfaced for you about human freedom, your personal choices and how these affect the lives of others in our Church? In society? Jesus taught us to love our neighbours as ourselves (cf. Matthew 22.39; Mark 12.31).

3. In moving forward, what activities should our Church undertake to reinforce this teaching in today's world?

Week 4

Vulnerability & Solidarity

The global pandemic sets forth important lessons for all of us about vulnerability, compassion and solidarity toward our fellow human beings. One of the most common expressions to emerge during this pandemic time, and often stated by those in leadership roles, is: "We're all in this together." Indeed, the concerted efforts of people, businesses, civic and religious institutions, and all orders of government, to assist individuals and communities adversely affected by the pandemic have been truly inspiring. At the same time, the pandemic also yielded (especially early on) some negative examples of persons who took advantage of human vulnerability, such as by depriving others of basic needs through mass-buying and hoarding, or by attempting to resell staple goods and essential services for fiscal profit and personal gain. Programs offering shelter to the homeless and financial assistance to persons in need; individuals and groups engaged in community food drives, sewing masks or producing hand sanitizer; neighbours calling on neighbours; initiatives to purchase and package supplies for the needy— all of these examples (and more) demonstrate the best of the human spirit. They reflect an understanding that all human beings are vulnerable and that society can only truly thrive when its members, moved by compassion and a sense of solidarity, care for one another.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What has been your experience of vulnerability, compassion or solidarity during this time of COVID-19? How has this impacted you and/or your relationships with others?
2. What questions or lessons has the pandemic surfaced for you about how we reach out and care for vulnerable persons in our Church? in society?
3. In moving forward, what activities should our Church undertake to promote a greater sense of solidarity in the human family, ensuring that "we all stay in this together"?

Week 5

Responsibility for the Common Good

The pandemic requires all of us to be especially mindful of our physical presence in the world and of our right conduct in relation to others. Throughout the pandemic, we have been advised to stay in our homes or immediate family circles, to restrict our close interactions to small cohorts or "bubbles" of people, and to maintain appropriate physical or social distance, all for the sake of everyone's well-being. Out of concern for ourselves, our

neighbours and even strangers, we have voluntarily limited our interactions with others in order to keep from spreading or contracting a harmful and potentially deadly virus. In these ways, we have experienced how the good of the individual is dependent upon and reached in relation to the good of the whole, the common good. Responsibility for serving and fostering the common good has application beyond the pandemic, of course. Generally speaking, we promote authentic human development and flourishing in the way that we live, care for others, work, organize society and interact with one another. Sometimes, too, for the sake of the common good, we are required to address and amend sinful behaviours and attitudes that “distance” people socially from one another or that threaten to erode the well-being of persons. This includes such evils as prejudice, racism and bigotry, violations against human dignity and the right to life, promoting economic profit over people, and environmental degradation of our common home.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What has been your experience of physical or social distancing during the pandemic? How might you describe this experience in terms of promoting or serving the common good?
2. What questions or lessons has the pandemic surfaced for you about personal and social sin in our Church? in society?
3. In moving forward, what activities should our Church undertake to encourage healthy social interactions and human relationships free of prejudice and malice?

Week 6

Healthy use of information technologies

Throughout the pandemic, we learned new communications skills and employed multiple platforms to stay connected with one another. One of the great blessings to surface during this pandemic time has been the use of various communications technologies to help bridge physical distances and to keep people connected through time and space. Employed creatively by individuals, families, schools, workplaces, churches and many others, these various means of technology literally transformed our world and allowed us to continue life with a remarkable degree of connectivity. As we continue to use all the means of information technology available to us today, it is important also to be prudent in our use of these technologies to ensure that they do not give rise to destructive situations or behaviours. At times, this may require us to refrain from the technological imperative that suggests that if we can use it, we must. It may also require us to limit or restrict our access on certain platforms, or to exercise prudent discernment with respect to information that is presented. The essential question to ask in our use of communication technology is whether it contributes to the betterment of the human person and human community.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What role does information technology, internet and social communication have in your home? Do you consume information technology passively or do you reflect on the moral implications of its use for you, your family and others?
2. What questions or lessons has the pandemic surfaced for you about positive and negative uses of technology in our Church? in society?
3. In moving forward, what activities should our Church undertake to promote new, creative and life-giving digital communications and form families in the healthier use of information technology?

Week 7

Value & dignity of human work

The global pandemic had (and continues to have) a devastating effect upon our economy, affecting employers and employees alike in virtually every sector of society. It may be many years before the total impact of the pandemic is truly known in our province or territory, our country or the wider world. What is certain, however, is that COVID-19 continues to influence economic conditions around the globe, and to create a number of unprecedented situations bearing upon human labour, such as: large-scale and forced periods of unemployment; new work environments requiring rapid adaptation, and extraordinarily heavy demands placed upon essential sectors of human service. Some areas of the economy have been particularly hard hit by the crisis, and may never recover, leaving many people deeply worried about their future livelihood. The Church herself has not been exempt from facing many of these same challenges.

In many instances, we have witnessed great efforts made to preserve and uphold the essential value of employment and the dignity of workers. In other situations, employment conditions during the pandemic have brought to our awareness the basic moral tenets of just employee employer relations. Our Christian response has been (and must always be) to promote the value and dignity of human work for individuals, their families and the local communities where they live and serve.

Questions for Reflections:

1. How has COVID-19 affected the conditions of your work life and family? What has this experience taught you about the nature, value and dignity of your work?
2. What questions or lessons has the pandemic surfaced for you about the way(s) in which we relate to economic structures in our Church? in society?
3. In moving forward, what activities should our Church undertake to promote just economic recovery and a renewal of dignity and respect in the workplace?

