



1 October 2020

Dear Fathers, Pastoral Animators and Parishioners

I usually begin these monthly letters on September 1st; I am one month late this year. What can I say: COVID. That's at least part of the story, speaking of which:

COVID19. We continue to deal with the pandemic, the best way possible. There is not much else we can do. We listen carefully to the protocols given by the Chief Medical Officer, and we follow her directives as closely as possible. These change from time to time. While I was hoping we were headed towards a greater easing of restrictions, the second wave means that restrictions may be strengthened. Simply put, the present impact on Masses continues to be:

- Spacing of two meters between everyone, except in family cohorts;
- Wearing a mask to receive Communion; Communion given on the hand;
- Sanitizing the church between Masses and other services;
- Registering of participants for contact tracing;
- 100 persons maximum for weddings and funerals;
- No congregational singing;
- Confirmation services outside of Mass, with a 15 maximum of Confirmation candidates.

Virtual Meetings. Almost all meetings are happening these days by Zoom or some other suitable portal. While this “feels different”, holding meetings by Zoom is proving to be beneficial. More of us over time are becoming more familiar with how to use the program. I am also seeing that more people show up for a meeting than before-COVID, probably because we don't have to travel anywhere to attend.

Workshop on Diocese and Parishes. Speaking of which, I have created a workshop on the relationship between a diocese and its many parishes. Before the pandemic, my plan was to offer this workshop by deanery, and had done so three times: in Peace River, in Girouxville, and in St-Isidore in French. Since mass gatherings are problematic at this time, I will be offering this same workshop by Zoom. It will no longer be by deanery – anyone may attend, simply by registering for it beforehand (so that you can receive the invitation and link). While I may offer it more than twice, my initial workshops will be on Thursday evening 15 October, from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm, and on Friday afternoon 16 October, from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm. What was a 5-hour workshop I expect to fit into half the time.

If you wish to register for either of these, simply contact Lauri Friesen at 780.532.9766 or by email at exec.agm@live.ca.

Clergy Changes. Over the summer, we had a clergy change in the Archdiocese.

Father Benjamin Nwaeje, who was most recently in Chateh (Assumption), also serving the Catholics in Rainbow Lake, completed his term in our diocese and moved to the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, and has been posted to Sacred Heart Parish in Virden, MB.

We welcome *Father John Basiimwa, FMH*, who will eventually take up residence and ministry in Chateh and Rainbow Lake. Father John is a Franciscan Missionary of Hope – the same community as all the priests now in the High Level Deanery. Father John has lived previously in the United States, and is the Vicar General of his Congregation. The Franciscan Missionaries of Hope have their headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

CCCB Plenary. Near the end of September each year, the bishops of Canada have a plenary assembly. This is the one time of the year that all bishops come together to discuss and discern some direction that will affect the Church across the country. This has always been an in-person event, and in latter years, it has been held at the NavCan Centre near Cornwall, Ontario. This year it was a “virtual” meeting – we all stayed home and met via Zoom. This had a different feel to it, as you can imagine. Despite the fact, we had some very enlightening reports and discussions.

Aside from standing items (finances, regional and committee reports), the major topics of this year’s meeting were the effects of COVID19, the Office for Life and the Family, Indigenous initiatives, Development & Peace, and the Canadian bishops’ response to Pope Francis’ apostolic letter, *Vos estis lux mundi* (on dealing with bishops accused of sexual abuse or their negligence in handling such abuse).

Archbishop’s Dinner. For the past several years, each deanery in turn would host an Archbishop’s Dinner. Because of COVID19, it was not possible for us to hold such a dinner in 2020, and I’m not sure yet what the prospects are for 2021. So, being as inventive as they are, the chancery staff have come up with a way of having an Archbishop’s Dinner on line. It will look like this:

- I will be live-streamed preparing a meal in the style of the many cooking shows we see on TV. I will comment on the preparing of this meal as I do it.
- Being on line, everyone in the archdiocese can access this. You don’t have to belong to a particular deanery.
- In exchange for a free-will offering, I will send you a copy of my recipe.
- There will be a silent auction on-line throughout that day.
- This will take place on Friday 6 November 2020. By then, my staff may have added another element or two to this event. Watch for details on the archdiocesan website at www.archgm.ca



Most Rev. Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.