



FROM THE VINEYARD

Newsletter No. 95; March 13, 2020

COVID-19 CONTINUES TO IMPACT OUR PROVINCE, NATION AND WORLD. Yesterday, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health advised the immediate cancellation of all public gatherings of more than 250 people. Since many of our Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist will exceed that number, I have directed the cancellation of all Sunday Masses in the Diocese of Peterborough this weekend. Although many of our parishes have smaller congregations, closing only some parishes would put added pressure on the communities that remained open. This step is being taken out of an abundance of caution (to coin the current phrase) concern for our parishioners and for the common good. The faithful of the diocese are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass for as long as this situation goes on. Please note that weekday Masses are not affected. We will continue to monitor events and the advice of public health officials and we will provide regular updates.

BECAUSE OF CORONA VIRUS CONCERNS, THE ANNUAL WAY OF THE CROSS has been cancelled for the City of Peterborough. I am sorry that this traditional Good Friday event, which has been very successful over the years, will not go ahead in 2020. Caution and prudence dictated that we should not bring together a thousand people from our community and beyond. In some ways, that is a measure of the great success that this Way of the Cross has been. I wish to thank the organizers for the effort they made in the preparation of this event – with every hope that it will bear fruit next year!

ON THE GOOD NEWS FRONT, THE PETERBOROUGH MEDICAL BRIGADE recently completed its 20th mission. Under the direction of Dr. Hardy Friesen and the spiritual guidance of Fr. Paul Massel, their team of five doctors, seven nurses and five support staff spent two weeks in Mbarra, Southwestern Uganda. They saw over 1100 people, some critically ill. While some were treated in local hospitals, others they hope to bring to Canada for life-saving surgery. The Brigade is grateful for the great support of Catholic parishes, C.W.L's, Knights of Columbus and the St. Vincent de Paul Society: their donation of vitamins and medical supplies made this trip and the provision of free medical service possible. And it all began this year with a fundraising event featuring the Celtic group "Hunt the Hare." The Brigade thanks all those who assisted this effort by their talent and generosity!

THE SSVN SISTERS (SERVANTS OF THE LORD AND THE VIRGIN OF MATARA) serve with great dedication and zeal at Sacred Heart and St. John the Baptist parishes in Peterborough. This week they were privileged to host their provincial superior, Mother Immaculate Conception, who manages to visit from the U.S. on a yearly basis. I was happy to meet with her, to hear about some of the work of the SSVN Sisters around the world, and to thank her for the fine contribution of their good Sisters to the life of the Church in Peterborough.

Pax et Bonum, † Daniel