



FROM THE VINEYARD

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WITH THIS SUNDAY'S FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD, the Christmas season draws to a close. It was destined to be an unusual Christmas and became even more so with the provincial lockdown which took effect on Boxing Day. With religious gatherings restricted to ten people, there will be no celebration of Sunday Masses, although churches will be open for private prayer. We have decided to resume celebration of Weekday Masses in our parishes, adhering to the numerical cap of ten and observing all the usual safety protocols. We also continue to record and broadcast Sunday Mass from the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains on our You Tube Channel. Check out our Diocesan website for a list of other parishes in the Diocese of Peterborough that are broadcasting the Mass.

WE WERE SADDENED TO LEARN OF THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR THOMAS SYMONS, who passed away on New Year's Day. Professor Symons was well-known in the educational community and beyond as the first President of Trent University, and a man of many other accomplishments. He worked with Bishop Nicola DeAngelis on the establishment of SACRED HEART COLLEGE in Peterborough and became its first and founding President. Professor Symons was awarded a Knighthood in the Order of St. Sylvester in 2012 for his dedicated work on behalf of Sacred Heart College. We extend our sincere condolences to his family at this time of their loss. "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord!"

WE ALSO OFFER OUR SYMPATHIES to the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph upon the death of Sister June Nash, CSJ, who passed away on December 27 after 67 years of consecrated life. Sister June worked for many years in nursing and health care, and then served for a dozen years as chaplain and pastoral counsellor at St. Peter Catholic Secondary School. Sister June was well-known around town and will certainly be missed. She is in our prayers.

OUR PERMANENT DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM continues to meet virtually, and I'm looking forward to "zooming in" for part of tomorrow's monthly session. They will be discussing liturgical theology, preaching and a variety of topics with the input of Father Jerry Tavares, Anne Heemskerk and Deacon Brad Lewis.

SPEAKING OF ONLINE SESSIONS, we met virtually on Wednesday with our priests and many of our Diocesan staff. It was a good opportunity to touch base after Christmas and to deal with various issues impacting us during the provincial lockdown. The priests of the Diocese are working with dedication even during this unusual time and, like many others, doing so under stressful circumstances.

THESE ARE DIFFICULT DAYS with surging coronavirus case numbers and lots of anxiety, but there is also hope on the horizon. We should not neglect to pray during this pandemic! This Knights of Columbus Prayer in Time of the Pandemic is adapted from Pope Francis and would be a good spiritual practice for all of us in these days.

Fraternally, + Daniel