



FROM THE VINEYARD

Newsletter No. 171; February 25, 2022

THE WORLD WATCHES EVENTS UNFOLD IN UKRAINE with fear and trepidation. Pope Francis has asked that the faithful observe March 2nd, Ash Wednesday, as a day of prayer and fasting for peace in Ukraine. Ash Wednesday is already a day of prayer and fasting, so Catholics are invited to offer those acts intentionally for the situation in Ukraine and for the cause of peace. Pope Francis' letter of appeal may be found on our website. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has also issued a letter which may be read here. Let us pray fervently for our suffering sisters and brothers in Ukraine.

OUR PROVINCE ENTERS A NEW PHASE OF PANDEMIC RESPONSE with many restrictions being lifted as of March 1st. After meeting with our Re-opening Committee earlier this week, I have announced a series of measures that will also take effect on March 1st. While the pandemic is not yet over, we are making a cautious return to our usual liturgical practices. Churches and missions may open at full capacity. Pastors have the discretion to maintain limited seating in a section of the church according to local situations. Vaccine certificates or testing are no longer required for volunteers and all liturgical ministries may resume. While Holy Communion on the hand is still encouraged, it may be received on the tongue with a couple of precautions. Please note that masks continue to be required by those who attend Mass, two years old or older. You can read the entire memo here. We have waited a long time for these restrictions to be relaxed. I ask the cooperation of all in observing the ones that remain.

THE FIRST VIDEO OF OUR ONLINE LENTEN MISSION, featuring Ken Yasinski, rolls out this Sunday. Entitled "The Fullness of Purpose," this mission runs through the season of Lent and will include a new video each Sunday. You can find more information on the Sacred Heart College website. I'm delighted that our Diocese is sponsoring this virtual Mission along with Sacred Heart. I plan to participate, and I hope you will too!

LENT BEGINS ON WEDNESDAY with the Distribution of Ashes in churches across the Diocese. What a blessing to return to full capacity as we embark on this forty-day season of spiritual renewal, though prayer, fasting and almsgiving. It is also a season of intense preparation for catechumens (unbaptized persons) and those baptized in other churches as they prepare for the Easter sacraments and reception into full communion with the Catholic Church. Let us hold them all in prayer during this holy season.

THE PRINCIPALS OF THE PVNC CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD have been taking a couple of days of retreat. I was happy to celebrate Mass with them yesterday and offer the opening talk entitled "Rebuild, Restore, Renew Together." (The theme of Catholic Education Week.) This is the first time in two years the principals have been able to gather personally for this event and I pray that they truly enjoyed some days of restoration and renewal.

Fraternally, † Daniel