

PASTOR'S UPDATE TO PARISHIONERS – EE (7/10/20)

WHAT'S IN THIS UPDATE:

- PASTORAL MESSAGE TO PARISHIONERS FROM FR. FERGUSON
- ADA – EXPLANATION OF AN INITIAL PROJECT
- KENTON – FESTIVAL UPDATE #3 - REPEAT
- START OF WEEKEND MASSES – REMINDERS
- LIVESTREAM MASS SCHEDULE
- WEEKDAY MASSES
- UPDATED SOCIAL-DISTANCED CONFESSION SCHEDULE

PASTORAL MESSAGE TO PARISHIONERS FROM FR. FERGUSON

Greetings in the Lord!

Today's "UPDATE – EE" includes material to help us prepare for this weekend's Masses, whether you are able to come "on-site" or must remain at home. **If you come "on-site", please plan to wear a face covering per the directives of Bishop Brennan.** (We have a few extra masks in the narthex if you forget to bring one). I re-post **some important reminders for those who come on-site for Masses.**

As you know, I will be moving away from our parishes this coming Tuesday as I go to St. Andrew's parish in Columbus to serve as Parochial Vicar (Associate Pastor) and begin studies with the Theology of the Body Institute. I have enjoyed getting to know you all, and I thank all of you who have supported me these last two years, as I did my best to serve the spiritual needs of all of you as a servant-priest. I did what I could to be of service to you, and I appreciate your patience with my shortcomings. I know I failed in many respects, so I beg your forgiveness.

Please do welcome Fr. Shikina into Hardin County. He comes to sacrifice his time and effort and energy to serve your needs. Especially with this being his first pastorate, please give him a chance, and allow him to be his own person. He won't be a carbon-copy of Fr. Dave, or Fr. Tony, or Fr. Dan. But it's important to know that that's OK. He WILL have a great heart for all of you and will want to become part of your lives here as he, too, commits to serving your spiritual needs. We thank Fr. Shikina for his response to God's call to service. I am sure you will offer him your full support in the months and years ahead.

Today's Update EE will be the final one before my departure. I will leave it up to Fr. Shikina to determine how to proceed with future COVID-related parish Updates.

Our Mother Mary, Patron of our Hardin County Parishes, Pray for Us.

- Fr. Bill Ferguson, Pastor

ADA – EXPLANATION OF AN INITIAL PROJECT

COVID unfortunately has complicated countless aspects of parish life, and the same is true for a minor project that was initially raised as an idea just before COVID began. Because some confusion has apparently arisen about this project, I wanted to offer a brief background and explanation.

As many of you know, for many years, there has been a recognition by many that some cosmetic upgrades are long overdue inside the church – especially the worn carpeting, the pews in desperate need of refinishing, and a need for a repainting the walls. But because of the need to address a host of serious maintenance issues in the meantime over the 2 years I've been here, I never was able to proceed very far on this interior cosmetic initiative, which I've been told has been long-hoped-for. And of course, the understanding had always been that whenever that time would come, there'd have to be a well-coordinated "unified" approach to that major project with the input of many individuals.

Over the winter, before COVID hit, I was approached by some parishioners who came up with the idea of encouraging our parish to begin thinking about those upgrade needs and to build some enthusiasm for it, by initiating a couple of very small enhancements for the sanctuary, namely some altar cloths and a matching set of vestments for use by the clergy (priests and deacons) for especially the more significant occasions like Confirmations, RCIA Masses, First Communion, weddings, etc. etc. Many parishes use colored altar cloths and have such "matching" vestment sets which can be used by all the clergy at a given Mass. Since these were, in my mind, fairly minor elements (nowhere near any major "renovation" plans, which would still likely be some years away with all the planning and participation that would have to be done), I gave the OK. And the intent was to have a bulletin insert describing the context of these minor enhancements and the reasons for them, and that any donations to them would be completely optional, especially given the other pressing needs of our parish.

But just then, as we all know, COVID hit, and life got complicated. The altar cloths had just been ordered since some individuals had already committed to donating toward them. But we held off on doing anything further during the COVID "shutdown" period.

Now, in the "re-opening" process from COVID, the desire to continue with these minor enhancements came to my attention again, but I was hesitant to pursue a general appeal for donations for a project like this, since no doubt many parishioners have been adversely affected by COVID, and also in light of the fact that the annual BAA is impending. So, I gave permission that if these minor enhancements were to be pursued, any invitation to donate to the cause would be very limited and done privately, so as not to put pressure on anyone, again to respect the fact that many are suffering financially.

In that process, though, because of my lack of a "general" communication about the matter, it seems that inadvertently a lot of confusion has arisen about the intent of the minor enhancements (the altar cloths and matching vestments), and how it relates to the larger (much longer-term) needs to address the bigger items mentioned before, like the carpeting, pews, paint, etc.

All this is to say, I am profoundly sorry for any and all confusion I caused from this project, which was all along meant to simply be a fairly minor "enthusiasm starter" for the larger interior needs that will need to be dealt with at some point in the future. I want to clarify that those "larger" needs are not in any imminent stages of implementation; nothing at all has been decided upon, regarding those larger cosmetic improvements. Obviously, those will need to be discussed and vetted and decided upon with the participation of the usual consultative bodies, such as the Finance Council and our new Parish Council.

In hindsight, I admit that my lack of a "parish-wide" communication about this initial effort (which was the intent before COVID hit) no doubt contributed to the confusion. I usually do try to communicate things well to parishioners about what is going on in the life of our parishes. Obviously, I failed this time around, as I tried to respond collaboratively to some parishioner-generated ideas. To alleviate concerns, **I have directed that this initial "minor enhancements" project be put on "hold" temporarily** until Fr. Shikina is able to arrive and discuss with staff and others on what might need to be further communicated and how to proceed, in a way that reduces angst and concern.

Again, I failed in my communication. For all the confusion and hurt I have caused, I am truly sorry.

KENTON – FESTIVAL UPDATE #3 - REPEAT

Please see the Update (“CC”) for the most recent information about the ICC Parish Festival, slated to take place Sunday 9 August during the limited hours of Noon to 7:00 pm (assuming the State of Ohio expands limits on groups by then).

Just a reminder on the following requests from the Committee:

- We need **Theme Baskets** to be donated – BUT THIS YEAR, **ALL ITEMS FOR THE THEME BASKETS MUST BE “PRE-PACKAGED” INTO THEIR BASKETS**; THE BASKET TEAM WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ASSEMBLE THE ACTUAL BASKETS DUE TO TIME LIMITATIONS AND SANITATION CONCERNS. (Gift Certificates may be dropped off in envelopes.)
- We need items donated for the **Country Store**
- We need monetary donations toward the **Chicken Dinner**
- We **WILL NOT** be taking **ANY** homemade food donations for the dinner, and there will be no cake wheel

To drop off donations, please contact Kathy Klingelhofer at the office to arrange a time by calling the office at 419-675-1162. **For other questions or to get involved with the planning or volunteering**, feel free to contact Kate Johnson at 567-674-8533. Thank you!

START OF WEEKEND MASSES – REMINDERS

BASIC INFORMATION:

1. This weekend, of course, we continue public Masses, as allowed by our Ohio Bishops. Please note that we are observing the usual “summer” cluster Mass schedule:
Kenton: Sat 4:00 pm and Sun 9:00 am
Ada: Sat 5:30 pm and Sun 11:00 pm (remember that last year we had already decided that the 8:30 Mass would only be a “school year” Mass)
2. The usual **Saturday Confessions will not take place**; they will continue in the social-distanced format on Wednesdays and Sundays on a rotational basis as described in past updates. See the section below for an updated schedule.
3. Remember that the **obligation to come to Mass is dispensed until September 13** by the Ohio Bishops. You are not under any requirement to come if you do not feel comfortable in doing so. We will therefore continue to offer Livestreaming (on a rotational-location basis). See the Livestream section below for more information.

BEFORE COMING TO MASS:

1. According to the Diocese, those who are in **“high risk” demographics** or who have symptoms “are especially cautioned to avoid public gatherings, including Mass”. Please use your discretion and consult with a physician as needed.
2. **Masks:** As you noted in Bishop’s Guidelines, **all people in the pews on-site for Mass need to wear some sort of face covering**. The only exceptions are 1) those under age two, 2) when individuals are serving a liturgical role in the sanctuary itself, or 3) when you come up for Holy Communion. I know it is awkward and unpleasant to wear masks, but please cooperate with this directive of our Bishop. If you happen to forget to bring one, we will have a very limited supply of extra masks in the narthex of each church.
3. Do **“hand hygiene” at home** before coming.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU COME ON-SITE

1. Please make sure you **always maintain safe distance from everyone else** – 6 feet apart. I know it will be exciting to see everyone else after so long apart, but please refrain from the urge to run up and hug others, and please keep an eye on your children to make sure they don't do the same.
2. There will be **sanitizer** everywhere; please take a squirt when entering and when leaving.
3. Based on Bishop's Guidelines about social distancing, we have had to **close off every other pew** for social-distanced seating, and to space chairs apart in our "overflow" areas at each parish. We will be not be able to use every seat. Seating is more limited than before.
4. **FAMILY MEMBERS CAN SIT TOGETHER** within a pew.
5. **INDIVIDUALS MUST SIT 6' APART OR FROM THE NEAREST FAMILY.** On a practical level, this means that only 2 individuals are able to sit in an Ada pew or row of chairs, and only 3 individuals can sit in a Kenton pew.
6. Based on Bishop's Guidelines, we had to **remove hymnals and missalettes** and all other "papers" from the pews, to reduce surfaces to contaminate.
7. You are **not expected to try to sing** while wearing your masks; in fact, it is discouraged so as to reduce the potential spread of air-borne germs. The cantor and clergy will sing the hymns and responses for you.
8. There will be **no Offertory Procession** or the use of the **Sign of Peace** (shaking hands).
9. But a **collection** (using the long-handled baskets) will still take place.
10. **Bulletins** will only be passed out at the END OF MASS, so that they can be taken directly home and not handled in the pews.

HOLY COMMUNION

1. Based on **Bishop Brennan's directives and preferences**, we will still offer Holy Communion during Mass itself, but with the following points:
2. The **Precious Blood** will not be distributed except to Dcn. Mike or to our Instituted Acolyte.
3. We will have only **one line for Communion** (not two) in the aisle.
4. Therefore, and the reduce numbers in the sanctuary, we will **not need any EOMHC's**.
5. When you come for Communion, please maintain a **6-foot distance** between people in the aisle. There will be tape markings on the floor to assist.
6. **Remove your mask** before coming for Communion, according to guidance given by Bishop.
7. Bishop strongly prefers people to receive Communion "**in the hand**" to reduce potential contact with saliva, etc.
8. You should not wear gloves to receive Communion.
9. **Note for Ada:** Those seated in the Social Hall should REMAIN IN THE HALL for Communion; the clergy will come to you, which sometimes may have to occur after the main body has been tended to. DO NOT migrate into the main body of the church to join its Communion line.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

1. **After each Mass**, we will need a **few volunteers** to stay for a few minutes **to help sanitize** the pews that were used, handles, knobs, etc). Please consider helping with this. We will have gloves and cleaning supplies and cloths available.
2. We **may need** extra volunteers for **ushers** at some Masses to help with the Collection, depending on whether our regular ushers feel comfortable with coming to a given Mass. Please be alert and step forward if no one seems to be taking up the Collection.

NOTES FOR LITURGICAL VOLUNTEERS

1. Bishop wants to keep people in the sanctuary to a minimum. As such, we will have only one lector and one server for a Mass, in addition to the musicians.
2. **Lectors:** You are welcome to sit in a designated "Lector Chair" in the sanctuary between the readings. Be prepared to also do the Psalm on the occasions when we may not have a Cantor.

3. **Servers:** Your roles will be simplified for Masses, and I will give you instructions before Mass begins. Specifically, you do not need to “hold the Sacramentary” for the priest, and you will not need to set up the altar (Deacon or Acolyte will do that), nor the “washing of hands”. You will mainly assist with the Processional/Recessional Cross, the “bells”, and helping with the clearing of the altar.
4. **EOMHC’s** – as noted above, we will not need any EOMHC’s since we will have only 1 (or Ada’s 2) Communion locations. We will nearly always have either Deacon Mike or Acolyte Nick with us.
5. Remember, Bishop has indicated that those ministering in the sanctuary ought not to wear masks as they perform their duties while they are in the sanctuary (or in a procession).
6. **Ushers:** Please assist with parishioners upon arrival to show them the sanitizer, to help find seats which are socially distant as described above; continue to take up the Collection, but please immediately bring the collection into the Sacristy for safe keeping during Mass. There will be no Offertory (Gifts) Procession.
7. **Counters:** Kathy or Desiree will be in contact with you on how to go about counting the collection depending upon your comfort level and ability to attend. Please contact them for questions.

LIVESTREAM MASS SCHEDULE

We will continue to offer Livestreamed Cluster Masses for the benefit of those who are not ready or comfortable with coming on-site for Mass. This is being “rotated” between the two parishes each week.

According to the rotation, **Livestreaming will be from Immaculate Conception this weekend (July 12)** at the **9:00 am Mass**. The rotation will then continue to alternate between both parishes’ Sunday morning Mass, such that it goes “back and forth” each week between the times of 9:00 and 11:00.

To access this weekend’s Livestream Mass, please use the usual link we have been using:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVxcsTyz-ukNpEDHVkQWKVw>.

If it helps, there is now also a shortened link to the livestream YouTube channel: tinyurl.com/OLLAda

Attached to this Update is this weekend’s Livestream Mass **Worship Aid** for those viewing from home. (For those coming on-site, please DO NOT print this out and bring it with you, since we have been directed by the Diocese not to have hymnals or other papers in the pews, to reduce “surfaces” that could be contaminated.)

Also attached to this Update is this weekend’s **bulletin for Kenton** and a **bulletin for Ada**.

WEEKDAY MASSES

For **Weekday Masses**, please note that with the change of Pastors this coming week, we will not have any daily Masses scheduled at Ada. Most likely there will be no daily Masses scheduled for Kenton; if this changes, we will notify the usual daily Mass group.

Please stay tuned for the daily Mass schedule for the week of July 20, Fr. Shikina currently is planning to continue the existing “split schedule” until things get back to normal, but, again, any changes will be communicated in due time.

Thank you for your patience and flexibility.

UPDATED SOCIAL-DISTANCED CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Reminder that we are still offering the new “Social-Distanced COVID **Confessions By Appointment**” instead of the previous “Saturday” confession times. Please see the Confessions attachment on the parish websites for the particulars; appointments can be made by calling me at 419-634-2626 (leave a message if needed). MASKS ARE NEEDED. The following is continuation of the “rotated” schedule of dates and places:

SUN 12 JULY 4:00-6:00 @ KENTON

WED 15 JULY – CANCELLED

NOTE: **After Fr. Shikina arrives** (on Tues 14 July), the plans for how to offer Confessions beyond that date will be determined by him at that time.