

PASTOR'S UPDATE TO PARISHIONERS – O (4/24/20)

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PASTORAL MESSAGE TO PARISHIONERS FROM FR. FERGUSON

Greetings.

Today's "UPDATE – O" offers some reminders and updates of recent items. Please read them carefully. Also, keep making use of the **various Spiritual/Catechetical Opportunities** we've shared the last couple of weeks (see Update J).

We give thanks to God for what seems to be a slowing down of Coronavirus in many parts of our nation, and that we may be seeing a turning point here in Ohio.

Some general things to note from Bishop Brennan –

- Bishop indicated to priests this past week that the Ohio Bishops are in the process of working with the Governor in order to best decide **when and how to "re-open" parish life** in light of the impending lifting of the Governor's "stay-at-home" order. Currently, as you know, we are not to have public Masses up to and through Sunday May 3. The Ohio Bishops are still deciding what to do after that regarding Masses and other aspects of parish life. Once I hear anything definite from Bishop Brennan, I will let you know. Please be patient and flexible.
- Bishop has also indicated that next Friday May 1st will be designated by the United States Bishops as a special day of **reconsecrating the nation to St. Mary** under her title of "Mary, Mother of the Church" in light of the special needs and suffering brought on by the pandemic. (Canada will be doing the same thing.) Archbishop Gomez, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, will be doing a reconsecration at 3:00 EDT that day. Bishop Brennan says he will shortly be sending more information to our diocese regarding specifically how he recommends us marking this occasion here in central Ohio. So....once I hear more, I will let you know, hopefully in the next Update.

Regarding **local parish scheduling/making up of things** here in our cluster (e.g., missed PSR and RCIA classes, RCIA Initiation Sacraments, First Communion retreat and Mass, Confirmation interviews, committee meetings, etc., etc.) – please be patient. I will not know exactly how to go about addressing these commitments until I learn more from Bishop Brennan on how he wants to go about "re-opening" parish life throughout the Diocese. As you may imagine, there may very well still be state-mandated restrictions on types and sizes of gatherings, in various phases, even after the first of May. But all is still "up in the air" for now. When I hear more from the Bishop, I will work with my staff and our other consultative bodies to discern how to go about it all. And I will keep everyone posted. As always, if anyone has any questions in the coming days and weeks, please simply ask me directly, and please make sure that only accurate information is passed around, especially as things begin to develop and unfold.

I anticipate the next Update will come out on Tuesday.

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

- Fr. Bill Ferguson, Pastor

THIS SUNDAY – 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

This Sunday is the Third Sunday of the Easter Season.

Sunday Mass, as with past weekends, will be livestreamed, still at 9:00 a.m. A Worship Aid for Mass is attached.

To access this Mass, please use the same YouTube link you have already been using for the Sunday Masses:

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

KENTON ITEM: MAINTENANCE UPDATE - REMINDER

In my last Update, Update N, I gave parishioners **an update** on an important priority for the Immaculate Conception parish – our maintenance needs – and to **suggest some ways to help**, to begin thinking about as we hopefully begin to resume some on-site parish activity in the next few weeks. Please read that item if you haven't already. As I mentioned last time, it may take a few weeks for us to coordinate specific improvement efforts. So, please be patient after you submit your interest in helping out.

KENTON ITEM: T-SHIRT FUNDRAISING SALE

Immaculate Conception will have a T-Shirt Fundraising Sale to help out the local poor who may be affected by the unemployment, etc., brought on by Coronavirus, as well as the parish. The Kenton sale will benefit 50:50 the Kenton parish as well as the agencies which serve the poor of Kenton: St. Vincent de Paul, and LOVE, Inc., the needy assistance clearinghouse of Hardin County. It is anticipated that our local agencies will be seeing an increased demand for their services. With input from some members of ICC, I'm told that the T-shirt design was finalized earlier this week. Attached is the flyer and order form that was given to me to pass along. Please submit orders where indicated on the form. There may also be opportunity shortly for an online ordering option. For questions please contact Ann Johnson at acjohnson@alumni.nd.edu.

ADA ITEM: T-SHIRT FUNDRAISING SALE

Some interest was recently generated at Our Lady of Lourdes for a T-shirt fundraising effort to help out the local poor who may be affected by the unemployment, etc., brought on by Coronavirus, as well as the parish. This was a parishioner-generated initiative and an idea that was presented to me that came up from the grass-roots level within Ada, to benefit 50:50 the Ada parish and three agencies which are involved with serving the Ada poor. It is anticipated that local agencies will be seeing an increased demand for their services. The agencies it will benefit are the Ada Food Pantry, the Beatitudes thrift store (the former "Restore"), and LOVE, Inc., the needy assistance clearinghouse of Hardin County. To order, please see the attached flyer which was also attached earlier in "Update M".

ADA ITEM: OFFERTORY LOGISTICS - REMINDER

Two items for Ada folks to take note of:

- 1) **Flowers:** Deb wanted to pass along the following related to the flower donations in honor of loved ones: "I added a page labelled flowers on the website; it has the memorials listed and that is where I am putting pictures of the flowers and how beautiful the sanctuary looks." (For those who donated to the Flower Fund at Kenton, we will of course find other occasions throughout the year to make use of flowers in Immaculate Conception to beautify our liturgies).

2) Trial Balloon for Online Offerings: In the context of Coronavirus, the Diocese has just offered, free for the time being, what is supposed to be an easy-to-manage online, electronic method of making offertory contributions. Online (EFT) contributions is something that both our parishes have been researching for a while, and there are important considerations (fees, costs, internal accounting logistics and workload, etc.) that make it a bit complex for an entire parish to use. But since there is greater interest from parishioners nowadays for electronic giving opportunities (versus check-writing), OLL staff is willing to try out this new Diocesan-guided online offertory portal as a trial balloon and experiment to see how well it works, and for us to get “practice” doing it as the cluster continues to research options that it might use after Coronavirus ends. (As such, this experiment by OLL will also help Kenton to figure out eventually a similar service, which is something Kenton has been looking into, as well. Again, this is ONLY AN EXPERIMENT FOR NOW to see how it works and what demands it places on the staff “behind the scenes”, so, to keep things simple for our staff, it is being limited to the one parish for the time being.) **So.....all that said**, Ada folks are free to try out the new Online Offertory feature as an alternative to writing checks. Deb has placed a button on the OLL website (www.oll-ada.com) – look at the top of the Homepage – for this **Online Giving Portal**.

BOTH PARISHES: SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Here in Hardin County, we are blessed to have a scholarship Endowment Fund established at the Catholic Foundation. It is known as the “Augustine J. & Mary L. Dick Memorial Fund”. This spring, we were allowed by the Foundation to take a distribution from this Endowment Fund, so we have the opportunity to offer some scholarship monies. The stated Purpose of this Fund is: “This fund shall provide need based tuition assistance to students in Hardin County, Ohio, who wish to attend a Catholic college or university.” So....if you are a Hardin County parishioner who will be starting or continuing at a Catholic college or university next school year (2020-21), please contact me (Fr. Ferguson) directly to make application for these scholarship funds. Awards will be based upon number of applications, active involvement in either parish, and if need can be demonstrated. My e-mail is hamilton.college@outlook.com.