

I would like to start this pastoral letter with a history, hoping that everyone who reads it will not only laugh but also think about it.

A young monk arrives at the monastery. He is assigned to helping the other monks in copying the old canons and laws of the church, by hand. He notices, however, that all of the monks are copying from copies, not from the original manuscript. So, the new monk goes to the Old Abbot to question this, pointing out that if someone made even a small error in the first copy, it would never be picked up! In fact, that error would be continued in all of the subsequent copies.

The head monk, says, "We have been copying from the copies for centuries, but you make a good point, my son." He goes down into the dark caves underneath the monastery where the original manuscripts are held as archives, in a locked vault that hasn't been opened for hundreds of years. Hours go by and nobody sees the Old Abbot. So, the young monk gets worried and goes down to look for him. He sees him banging his head against the wall and wailing. "We missed the R, we missed the R, we missed the bloody R." His forehead is all bloody and bruised and he is crying uncontrollably. The young monk asks the old Abbot, "What's wrong, father?" With a choking voice, the old Abbot replies, "The word was CELEB R ATE.

Even during the pandemic we have a lot to celebrate: if you have food in the refrigerator, clothing in our closet, a roof for shelter and a bed to rest, then you are more rich than 75% of the world population; if you have bank account and some cash in your pocket, then you are among 15% of the world population; if you woke up this morning, then you are not among 1 million people who will die this week in the world; if you are not persecuted or in prison or suffering a war, then you are more fortunate than 500 million of people around the world; if you are reading this letter, then you are more fortunate than 3,000 millions of people who don't know to read.

Having said that, we should not forget the difficult time we are living and the consequences of not being precautionous, so let us celebrate responsibly and respectfully, and if we miss our love ones, let us remember that Jesus promised to be with us always until the end of times. Matthew 28:20.

Last weekend we celebrated the Solemnity of Christ The King, Pope Pius XI instituted this feast in 1925 with his encyclical *Quas Primas* to respond to growing nationalism and secularism. He recognized that these related societal ills would breed increasing hostility against the Church. His encyclical reminds the faithful that while governments and philosophies come and go, Christ reigns as king forever. Nationalism divides our loyalties and it is good to love one's country, but ultimate loyalty is due only to Christ and his kingdom. Ideologies that ask us to put our nation above Christ and his Church are incompatible with service to the kingdom. To acknowledge the kingship of Christ means that we should dedicate ourselves to prayer, to building up our families and our parish communities, and to bringing healing to a broken world, something is very needed in our country.

This coming weekend as we begin a new liturgical year with the first Sunday of Advent, it is an opportunity for all of us as Catholics and citizen of this nation to make a serious act of contrition for our active or passive participation before and after elections asking the Lord for forgiveness

and healing, for reconciliation and peace. It is not a secret that we have offended God with activism or silence before a constant conflict and division using frequently the name of God in vain. It is time to move forward and look to the future with hope, that mistakes will be corrected and harmony will be established with our Christian cooperation and solidarity.

What is our task? In many ways, it is same as before the election and pandemic: to keep working for the dignity of all human life: the unborn, the migrant and refugee, people without healthcare, the homeless, the unemployed, the abused women and children, the inmate, and minority groups. It will change depending how we as civilization would like to reconnect with the spirit of this nation, correcting our wrong behavior, forgiving, loving and respecting the evident diversity existing among us; but essentially as Christians Catholics: proclaiming the Gospel and standing up for those on the margins, for those whom Jesus called “the least of our brothers and sisters”.

We are doing our best at St. Columbkille Parish to keep our environment sanitized and safe. Please, become familiar with our regulations and share it with people you may know who are not yet coming to church. I am not only reminding the importance of practicing sacraments but more importantly to keep feeding our spiritual life.

1. When you attend church, you must remember to bring your face mask and keep it on out of respect to others.
2. Practice social distancing when you find a seat and when you come up to receive Holy Communion.
3. Use hand sanitizer which is placed at each door, once you enter and when you leave the church.
4. Families may stay together and if someone feels sick they should stay home.
5. Take a bulletin on your way-out following mass.
6. It is always joyful to meet with friends at the end of the mass, but we do recommend to meet socially outside the building taking advantage of our good weather and observing distancing.
7. Your donations and offertory envelopes can be dropped off before or after mass in one of the donation boxes located throughout the Church.

Our Weekend Masses are: Saturday 3:00pm and 5:00pm & Sunday 7:00am, 9:00am 11:00am and 5:30pm. We keep a count of the number of parishioners for each mass, if it is deemed necessary, we will schedule overflow masses in our Parish “Iona Hall” to observe the social distancing, for sure on Christmas.

Because the dispensation from obligation to attend mass has been extended until New Year, we are going to continue giving **Communion under the Portico** (driveway) to those that prefer to watch the mass on TV. It will be Sundays from 12noon to 12:30pm. No need to exit your car.

You also have the option to come on a weekday to avoid the crowd. **Mass is at 8:00am from Monday to Friday** and the church will remain open until noon.

I invite you to our **Communal Rosary and Marian Novena, Saturdays at 8:00am.**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is taking place under the Portico on Saturdays from 8:30am to 9:30am, and by appointment contacting one of the Priests at 239-489-3973.

We are providing **the Eucharist to Homebound**, if you or someone you know wishes to receive our pastoral care and the sacraments, let us know. We are not yet attending nursing homes and Hospital visits are very limited.

Gospel Forum for Women Tuesdays at 9:00am now in (Ministry Center Room 1) please, bring your Bible, keep your face mask on inside the building and observe the distancing.

Men Fellowship Group is still meeting online using Zoom on Mondays at 7:00pm. For additional information call Tom Holland at 508-0668.

Youth Group 2020-2021 Confirmation Preparation / Faith Formation for Children / Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) Classes via Zoom, for additional information contact the Parish office.

The **2021 Offertory Envelopes** are available in the narthex (entrance of the church) If you prefer, we can mail them to you, please contact the parish office at 239-489-3973. We are open every day from 8:30am to 1:30pm from Monday to Friday.

Our 2021 Parish Calendars are available to take out after weekend masses.

Tuesday, **December 8th Feast of the Immaculate Conception**: Our masses will be at 8:00am, 10:00am, 12noon and 6:00pm.

On behalf of the Clergy and Staff, I wish you a Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving Day.

Fr. Lorenzo