



As we are getting used to what it means to be able to once again attend Mass it is important for us all to understand and accept the guidance given to parishes from Bishop Gary consistent with the orders of the Provincial Health Officer. Today we will answer two questions;

1. "Why must we register for a specific Mass and only attend that one Mass (stable Mass groups)?" and
2. "Why are the weekday Masses not using the weekend readings?"

Why must we register for a specific Mass and only attend that one Mass?

Instructions sent from the Diocese to all parishes before we were allowed to open the following rationale was given for stable community Mass groups;

*"Bishop Gary Gordon would like stress the important points below, taken from his Pastoral Letter entitled "Called to Embrace a New Pentecost" and the General Directives, dated May 21, 2020. The bullets highlight the importance of **stable "community Mass groups" and the need to establish contact tracing if required:***

e. We will be able to understand contact tracing for if one member of our little community tested positive for Covid-19, the other 49 people could be immediately tested and helped. If people are permitted to travel from Mass to Mass, the possibility of an outbreak could close the whole parish for a very long time. This type of controlled, organized group will be helpful for the health system in the event of an outbreak of Covid-19.

*The Bishop would like to be very clear by stressing that during this initial phase, **parishioners are to attend only one Mass per week, in one stable community group.***

We have seen that at a recent gathering of 30 family members here in BC one person, unknown to them, had Covid-19 and passed it on to 15 of the 30 people. This shows how easily and quickly the virus can be passed to others at inside gatherings with those we spend time with.

A similar situation could happen in our parish if 1 person unknown to them had the virus and came to a Mass of 50 people. They could potentially infect half to all attendees. Once it was discovered they had Covid-19 all 50 people would need to be located, informed and tested. All people the 50 parishioners had been in contact with would also have to be contacted, informed and tested. The number of people increases very quickly dependent on how wide our individual social circle is (Dr. Henry says "in our bubble".) To compound the rate of infection if the original person with Covid-19 attended other Masses they would potentially infect all of those people and their social contacts multiple times for each of the now approximately 100 people they exposed to the virus.

To minimize spread of infection and keep people safe we are asked to attend only one Mass as being with two or more groups increases health and safety risk to many other parishioners. We are going to one Mass at the same time every week consistently for a) ourselves to minimize the number of potential people we can infect should we get it and b) minimize the number of other people who might give it to



us. Recently in South Korea one person going to multiple social events infected hundreds of other people. The risk is real.

Please attend only the one Mass at the same time every week to keep yourself and others safe. To verify we are all following the safety protocols at each Mass there is a list of people registered for that specific Mass that we check off and keep to help with contact tracing should it be needed. Attending multiple Masses complicates this tracing.

“Why are the weekday Masses not using the weekend readings?”

In answering this question as Father John so beautifully says;

- “Basically, each day is a holy day unto the Lord and each day has a liturgical theme. For instance, the day after Pentecost is dedicated to Mary, Mother of the Church. It would be illogical to celebrate a feast (at least I think) for days on end and miss the other important festivals that the Church offers us. And each Mass offers us the possibility of intimate union with Jesus in Holy Communion. There is no greater gift. During these days of a new normal, we really need to focus on the gift we are receiving and not the gifts we are missing.”

It is recognized that not everyone can attend a Mass Saturday evening or on Sunday or even when they choose and how many times they choose. To accommodate up to 250 people Father Roger does 3 weekend and 2 weekday Masses at St. Edwards. All Masses are conducted according to the Ordo of the Church and each day specified readings and prayers are used in the Lectionary and Sacramentary specific to that day or feast. The presence of Christ comes to us in every Mass through the consecrated Body and Blood of the Eucharist and this is how we meet Jesus throughout the year in the Word and in the Eucharist, i.e., being with our one God through many means.

Patience and Understanding

Lord Jesus open the minds and hearts of all believers in the Diocese with patience and understanding.

Send the Holy Spirit to bring knowledge to us so we understand why things are different now.

Let Wisdom inform us that the rules of the Diocese are for the health and safety of all people.

Let us let go of “the way we have always done things” as it does not apply right now.

Let us accept the need for a different way to worship at the time of this pandemic.

Let us accept the guidance of the Bishop and of the Provincial Public Health Officer.

We must accept they know what is best for all people in what they have suggested.

Lord Jesus let us all use patience and understanding to help us get through this opening up phase.

Amen