

Dear Parishioners,

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and had the opportunity to take stock of all that we've received from God. We have been truly blessed, no matter how difficult this year has been. We thank God for the gift of family, the gift of a faith community and the gift of life. Let's give that some thought as we enter a new Liturgical year.

Several people have inquired how the Governor's recent pronouncements have affected the parish. Last week, the bishop issued new guidelines but not much has changed. Mass size and the wearing of masks will continue as has been the practice. We will continue to restrict the amount of people to 25% of seating capacity, we will still be required to wear face masks upon entering Church and remain with them on until we leave. The bishop has extended the dispensation from Mass until January, but if we choose to stay away, we will need to watch the Mass on TV or the internet. All parish meetings are cancelled until mid-December. The parish staff will continue to work- but at home as much as possible. This means that if you need to see someone on the staff for parish business, please call ahead and make an appointment.

November 29 we began a new Liturgical year. The hallmark of the new year is that the Gospel throughout the year will come from Mark, with a sprinkling of John's Gospel. Mark, as we will see, is different from Matthew. Mark's Gospel is considerably shorter than Matthew's. Mark's Gospel doesn't have the parables that Matthew's has. Mark is also writing for an entirely different community. Whereas Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish convert community, Mark is writing to a community that is being persecuted. Mark was writing to the Christian Community in Rome. Tradition tells us that he was a second generation Christian who got much of his material from St. Peter who had moved to Rome and would later be martyred there. As we begin the new year with Mark, let us come to learn to love and appreciate who Jesus is and what He means to us.

I continue to be worried about the rapid increase in reported Covid-19 cases in our county. I hope you take the necessary precautions for your safety as well as your family and community. Please keep those who have this terrible illness in your prayers. Let's get through this together. Fr. Tom