

From: Fr. Michael J. Lumpe
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 4:18 PM
Subject: Update Letter to Priests
Attachments: RCIA Leaders .pdf; My Dear Elect and Candidates .pdf

My dear brother priests:

The austerity of this Lenten Season, coupled with the coronavirus situation, is broken through today with the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord. I hope that you were able to enjoy this day, doubly so given the fact that today was a blue-sky day in Columbus -- I hope it was the same where you are and that you had an opportunity to get outside, enjoy the sunshine, go for a walk -- maybe even a rosary walk.

I have a few items to share with you today.

FIRST, we had 28 priests who met the outlined criteria step forward to volunteer for COVID-19 "end of life" sacramental care in hospitals in Franklin County and wherever else they may be needed to help in the Diocese. I want to thank them, again, for stepping forward -- what a great witness to the priesthood in serving those in need. I joined them on a ZOOM conference call this afternoon for a Q&A with the team of Dr. Marian Schuda, Fr. Mike Lumpe and Fr. Dean Mathewson. From the comments shared by today's ZOOM participants the YouTube video they watched in advance of the conference call, and the chance to dialogue during the conference call, were both very helpful.

Tomorrow, March 26, at 1 p.m., another ZOOM conference call Q&A opportunity with Dr. Schuda will be available -- especially for priests outside of Franklin County who also meet the outlined criteria. I would encourage these priests who are under the age of 69, and who meet the other criteria as outlined in a previous Update Letter to Priests to participate in the March 26 conference call. Please e-mail Mike Lumpe (mlumpe@columbuscatholic.org) and he will send you the ZOOM information, including along with the link to a brief YouTube video to watch in advance of tomorrow's ZOOM conference call. Incidentally, you do not need a computer camera to join in the ZOOM call -- a regular telephone will suffice. My thanks, again, to Dr. Schuda for sharing her medical expertise.

SECOND, just a reminder along these lines to please contact Mike Lumpe or Steve Moloney if someone on your parish staff, your parish school, your parish, a volunteer -- if anyone contracts the coronavirus that we should know about so that appropriate measures can be taken with regard to notifying people in a timely manner.

THIRD, today was a worldwide opportunity to join Pope Francis in prayer to end the coronavirus. This Friday, March 27, is another opportunity and I hope that you can join in, and share with your parishioners, school

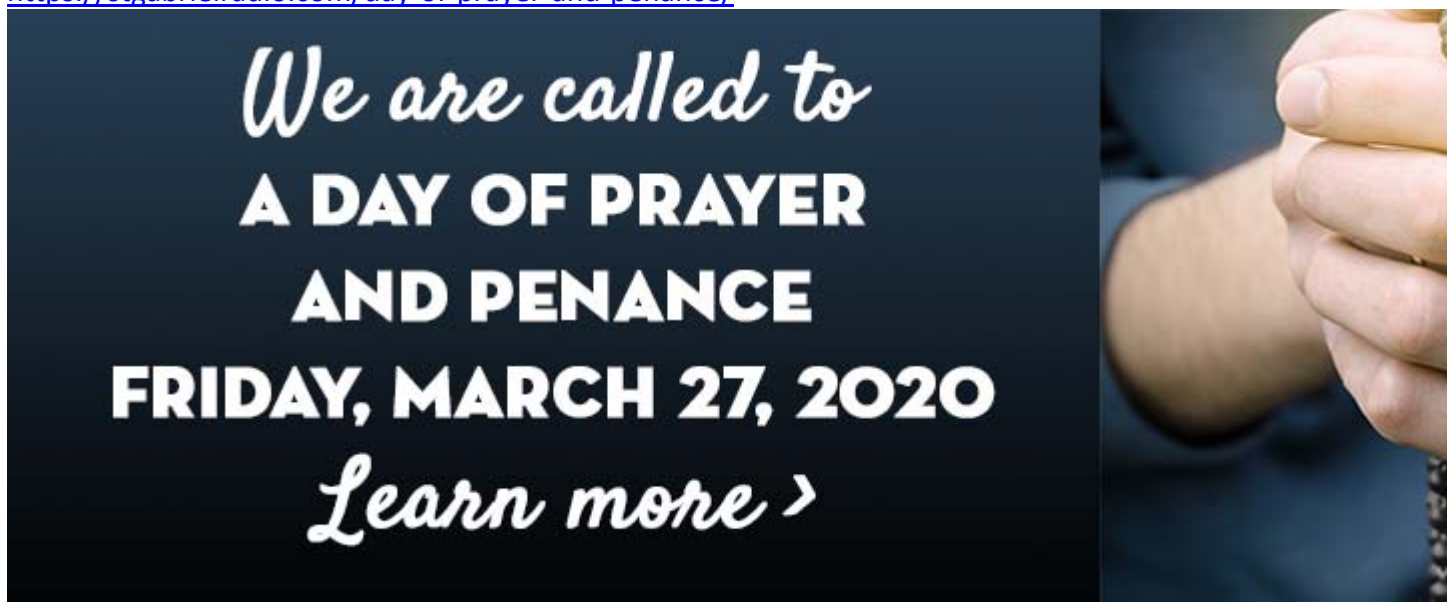
families and others this much needed time to join together in prayer with Pope Francis and others throughout the world.

Friday, March 27: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-03/pope-calls-for-christians-to-unite-in-prayer-for-end-to-pandemic.html>

I am also making Friday, March 27, a **Day of Prayer and Penance in the Diocese of Columbus**. To facilitate this this day of prayer will be broadcast on Saint Gabriel Radio (AM820 in Central Ohio, FM88.3 in Southern Ohio, and live-streamed at www.stgabrielradio.com. This will be available from 8AM-5PM, with St. Gabriel Radio rejoining their regularly scheduled programming after this special radio time. You may wish to offer the prayers of the Mass For the Sick (#45 Masses for Various Needs and Occasions) using the readings of the day either privately or live-streaming.

Here is a link and a graphic to include on your web pages, Facebook pages, and other social media:

<https://stgabrielradio.com/day-of-prayer-and-penance/>



FOURTH, there will be some more definitive guidelines for parishes about Holy Week and Easter liturgies in tomorrow's Update Letter to Priests. Also, please find attached some letters concerning RCIA for this year that I need you to send out to the appropriate people in your parishes.

FIFTH, I invite you to **Save the Date for June 19, 2020 - Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**. Since we cannot gather this year to celebrate our priesthood at Chrism Mass, I would like to get together as priests on June 19. So for now please save this date and I will get more information to you for this day to celebrate our fraternity as priests.

Again, please know of your saying "YES!" to God calling you to the priesthood as the Blessed Virgin Mary said "YES!" to the angel Gabriel is one of great joy. May our priesthood always imitate the joyful "YES!" of Mary in our proclaiming the good news of the Gospel. Let us continue to pray for one another. God bless!

Fraternally,
Bishop Brennan

To Pastors & RCIA Parish Leadership

The past couple of weeks have been a constant whirlwind of change in both our community and our Church due to the need to implement the requests made by Governor DeWine to assist in the control and prevention of the COVID-19 virus in our region. As you already are aware, last week the bishops of Ohio made the difficult decision to suspend the public celebration of Mass in every diocese in the state, thus giving dispensation to the faithful from their obligation to attend Mass at least through Easter Sunday.

I am aware that many questions have arisen from the decision to suspend Mass and all parish activities and events in regards to those individuals you have been journeying with in preparation for the reception of the sacraments at the Easter Vigil. First, as painful as it is, we cannot celebrate the Vigil communally this year. I grieve for this loss, as this liturgy is the highpoint of our Church's calendar, indeed, the great celebration of the "Victory of our Lord". However, we in all charity must make this extreme sacrifice to safeguard our community, and follow the Governor's mandate to stay home in order to flatten the curve.

As a result, the initiation of our elect and candidates must be postponed until it is determined that it is safe to join as a community of faith once again for the reception of new members into our Church is a communal celebration and not a mere individual one. Now, more than ever we must focus on community in lieu of individuality. While I wish I could set a date for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation, I cannot because it is impossible to foretell what the future will unfold. I know this does not give you the answer you wanted, however, all we can do is wait and pray.

Attached with this letter is one for the elect and candidates. Please ensure that each person receives one along with my heartfelt prayers. Know that you too are in my prayers during this time of great confusion and anxiety. I ask that you direct any further questions or concerns about this issue to the Director for the Office for Divine Worship, Michelle Lemiesz (mlemiesz@columbuscatholic.org) and she will assist you. We will communicate to you any updates when circumstances change. In the meantime, let us pray for one another and for the mercy of our Lord.

Sincerely in Christ,
Bishop Robert J Brennan
Bishop of Columbus

My Dear Elect and Candidates

It seems like only yesterday that we came together to celebrate the Rite of Election/Call to Continued Conversion and were joyfully looking forward to the day when you will join us as members in full communion with the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, since that time, all of us face new challenges daily due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, which sadly seems to have no end.

As you already know, within the past week, the bishops of Ohio decided to suspend the public celebration of Mass in every diocese of the state, thus giving dispensation to the faithful from their obligation to attend Mass at least through Easter Sunday. In addition, all other gatherings and liturgical events are cancelled as we seek to work together with our government to stem the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. All of these decisions have been extremely painful and difficult to make.

It grieves me that all of this has influenced your final weeks of preparation for the Sacraments. Instead of this being a time of reflective prayer and joyful anticipation, it has become a time of anxiety and uncertainty and you may be wondering how your journey will end. I am equally saddened that your reception into the Church must be postponed. These extraordinary times require us to exert “extreme charity” and sacrifice for the benefit of the greater good. I invite you to join with all of us during these challenging times to pray for the gift of spiritual communion and to use the various resources available on our diocesan website for prayer <https://columbuscatholic.org/liturgical-and-prayer-resources>. I pray that you remain steadfast in your desire to become one with us and that this time will only increase your faith and longing for the day when we will all come together at the table of Lord, and share fully in the Eucharistic Feast.

Unfortunately, I cannot foretell what the future will unfold, and given the current outlook, it would not be prudent to speculate on dates. All I can promise you is that when we are given the green light, decisions will be made and communicated. In the meantime, we must wait, and pray for that day when together, we as Church will gather in praise and thanksgiving once again and you will become one with us making our joy complete.

Prayer unites us despite physical “social distancing”; the Lord is always present to us and he is asking us to place our anxieties and sacrifices before him in faith for he alone can transform sorrow into joy. May our Lord, Jesus be your companion during these challenging days.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Bishop Robert J. Brennan
Bishop of Columbus