

**January 31, 2021**

Dear Friends,

Beginning today we will enter upon our parish Mission, a time of spiritual reflection and prayer accompanied by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We will place the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance after the 10:30 Mass and then parishioners and guests will have the opportunity to come and pray and visit during the afternoon hours until the evening. At 6:45 Father Timothy Danaher, (a young Dominican priest with bilingual language skills) will lead us in Evening Prayer, repose the Blessed Sacrament and then give his presentation. This will be the pattern for all three nights—Tonight, Monday and Tuesday.

For almost a year, we have been inundated by the impact of the corona-virus. All of us know some who have contracted the virus. All of us have known some who have died of it or whose death was hastened because of the restrictions placed on family and others who are sick from other causes. Thank God that there are some vaccines that have been developed which will help us by pretty much preventing our contracting the disease or getting a severe case of it. Last Saturday I received the first vaccine injection with the second to come three weeks later.

I think we all realize that the vaccine is no simple cure-all. There are still risks on both sides of the equation. For some the vaccine is a risk they cannot afford to take. I have a brother who is in this category. So he has to be careful himself but so do those who love him have to be extra careful also. Personally, I have chosen to receive the vaccine because I am called with some frequency to enter the COVID-19 units in various nursing facilities to anoint the dying. Even though I don full PPE it is still a risk to enter and spend time in such units and to be in physical contact with dying patients. So far, I have been very blessed and greatly protected but I don't want to take any unnecessary risks.

What is still unknown about these vaccines is the long-term effect they may have on those who are inoculated with them. In a rush to get a reliable vaccine out into the general populace before overwhelming numbers of people contract the disease and succumb to it, the testing process has been concluded without a clear understanding of what long term effects from the vaccine might be. Some scientists are making an effort to surmise presenting both a best case and a worst-case scenario.

That is the science piece. But that is not my realm. My realm is the spiritual piece. And that is why I place my faith much more in the Lord Jesus than I do in the Pfizer vaccine even though I avail myself of both. These few days early next week will be opportunities for us all to come to spend time with Our Lord. To ask Him to be our hope and comfort in these perilous times, to ask him to get us back on the right track in our lives because we have sometimes wandered or lost our way. Sometimes we think that what we do is only our own business but that is not the message of Jesus. He taught us that He and his way, are the way. We cannot substitute what we want to do and simply assume that everything will be okay because we want it to be okay.

There is truth. We must live in that truth or we will perish. We are more at risk in our unrepentance than we are from the corona-virus. If we don't realize that then we are missing a lot. So make a decision to come out this week and pray quietly on your own before Our Lord and place your needs and your family's needs in his hands. He is truly the Hope we need at this time.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry