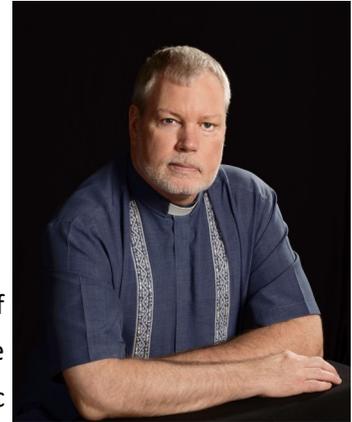




## Pastor's Page



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It was almost eleven months ago that, due to the rapidly increasing dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Seattle went into what many have come to call “lock-down mode.” The public celebration of Mass was suspended, and other reductions and constraints began to be introduced as a means to keep people safe from the troublesome virus that was rapidly sweeping the planet. While some of these restrictions have been eased and reduced, other limitations and safety measures have been broadly adopted and implemented.

As we approach Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent here in 2021, we continue to face many challenges and concerns regarding the pandemic, even as we look forward with hope and optimism to the protections that we hope and pray the new vaccines will bring us as they are distributed and administered. We are not out of the woods yet by a long shot, but there is reason to hope that the trees are beginning to thin out somewhat and that the sunlight will soon begin to filter through a bit more warmly and brightly.

As Lent begins, I remind everyone that the policy which began with the coronavirus shut down last year remains in effect—namely, the obligation to attend and participate at Mass in person on Sundays and holy days of obligation continues to be dispensed with until further notification by our Catholic Bishops. In addition, **Ash Wednesday is NOT a holy day of obligation, nor is there a Church requirement that people receive ashes on Ash Wednesday.** Those who are part of OLG, and who wish to celebrate Mass on Ash Wednesday, are most welcome to do so via either of the two Masses we have planned for that day. We have a **9:00 a.m. Public Mass planned for Ash Wednesday wherein ashes will be distributed** in a somewhat different form than most Catholics in the USA are familiar with. (A small pinch of the ashes will simply be sprinkled upon the crown of each person’s head. The priest or assisting minister distributing the ashes will NOT touch the person to whom the ashes are being administered.) We will also offer a **live-streamed Mass at 7:00 p.m. via Facebook and Vimeo.** There will be NO DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES at this evening Mass, though a special Lenten blessing will be offered.

There will also be two **Liturgies of the Word** (NOT Masses) offered on Ash Wednesday at OLG—**6:30 a.m. and Noon.** Both these services will include the distribution of ashes to any who are present. A blessed, prayerful and fruitful Lent to all at OLG.

Grace and peace,

*Fr. Kevin*