

## Our Best Efforts

*Opinions are like noses; everybody has one.*

Yeah, I know that there's a crude version of that saying. But the point is that decisions have to be made on the best information available to us.

Until this year, I had never been through a "pandemic." Had you? I know how to deal with a big snow storm and, to a lesser extent, a hurricane. But this sort of invisible natural disaster is a whole different animal. Who can tell me how to contend with it? To whom should I listen?

Like many or most of you, I am a rational person. I figure that the scientific people and, specifically, those who specialize in contagious diseases are the people who can direct us at a time like this. And so, for the past seven-or-so months we've been wearing masks, and we have structured our church to keep people at a distance, we have not had congregational singing, and we've made hand sanitizer widely available. These and, perhaps, a few other things have been advised. And, I am most grateful to our volunteers who have helped us enact these measures.

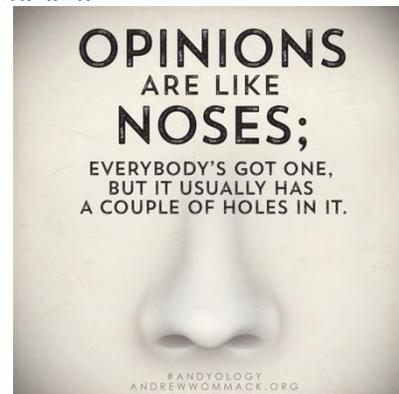
However, unlike the spectacle of a nor'easter or a hurricane, this natural disaster is mysterious, quiet and invisible. Nothing is really apparent unless you watch the television news. So, admittedly, the precautions we take can seem a little silly at times. We are placing a high degree of faith in our leaders and in those professionals who have given them guidance. Some people think that this is ceding control to a government with ulterior motives, and that it constitutes infringement on personal freedoms. But I cannot know this one way or other. Our cooperation with the lockdown and with the current measures was only-ever ordered to care for the common good. We sacrificed aspects of our worship and community life for one another and for the common good.

If it can be shown that the professionals made mistakes, were imprecise or some of them were duplicitous, then we do have a more difficult job of discerning to whom we should listen. But the fact remains that there are authorities who are "in the know." If it turns out that we were fools for listening, all I can say is that we did the best we could with the best information we had at hand.

## We need to get this right!

As the numbers of confirmed cases rise in the northern half of our country and the Flu Season bears down on us, we are being told to be more vigilant. We will continue the procedures we have in place and make adjustments where necessary. We do not want to become one of those places tagged a "hot spot." And, so far, the Catholic parishes of our area seem to have acquitted themselves quite well. I have not heard of any outbreaks in Catholic parishes near or far.

Does the news media sensationalize the hell out of this situation? Yes! What else is new? Every snow storm is portrayed as the end of civilization! And, as if the sensationalization weren't bad enough, now it's the absurdity of competing political ideologies. Like the stoic police officer in the old Dragnet television show from the 60's I want to say, "***Just the facts ma'am.***"



## **We need everyone's understanding and cooperation!**

- Volunteers report to me resistance from some attending Mass with respect to seating arrangements.
- Some want to sit where they want to sit.
- We need to seat people methodically to assure proper distribution and distancing.
- Just like on an airplane, somebody has to sit in the middle . . . Sorry
- If, for medical or psychological reasons you absolutely need a certain seat, discreetly tell a volunteer. Otherwise, please be a good sport and a loving Christian.