

November 22, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

As some of you may have learned in the past few days Fr. Dimas tested positive for Covid-19 on Wednesday evening. It is a sign of the times we are living in with the skyrocketing rates of infection in Anchorage that eventually one of the Dominicans would come down with the virus.

Fr. Dismas is doing reasonably well. He has cold like symptoms and fatigue. I ask that you keep him in your prayers. Covid is unpredictable. While it seems all will go well, we cannot be presumptuous. If you were exposed to Fr. Dismas from Friday, Nov 13 – Monday, Nov 16 consider getting tested. The CDC defines exposure as 15 minutes of cumulative contact, with or without a mask, under a distance of 6 feet, over a 24 hour period.

The other brothers tested negative. We were tested because I was informed on the same day that I had been exposed to someone who had been asymptomatic with Covid. Since the five of us Dominicans live closely together it made sense for all of us to get tested. The impact of this on the parish is as follows. After consulting with the doctor for the Western Dominican Province and reviewing our parish mitigation plan, the Dominicans will be observing the state guidelines for a 14 day quarantine. Public liturgies will be celebrated no sooner than Wednesday, Dec 2 provided none of the other Dominicans come down with the virus.

The friars who tested negative are maintaining a quarantine between ourselves. No community prayer, meals, recreation, or other activities. We are wearing masks in the hallways. We are staying under the CDC's defined threshold of exposure. The idea is to prevent passing along the virus in a "domino" fashion where brothers are being infected sequentially and therefore lengthening our quarantine time. We've had issues with false negative test results with our brothers elsewhere in the Western Dominican Province.

There is thematic resonance on this final Sunday of the liturgical year, the Solemnity of Christ the King, that our celebration of the conclusion of the liturgical year is affected by this virus that has affected the lives of people around the world for the past 9 months. Indeed, Christ is the King of the Universe and All Creation. The reality of Covid-19 is symbolic of a world completely infected by sin. Hopelessness, vanity and isolation becomes king when we do not recognize the soul's deepest desire to know, love and serve God. Without the mercy of Christ the King given to us by his Cross and Resurrection, we are doomed to eternal isolation from others and God as sure as the exigencies, and their side effects, of stopping Covid-19 has physically, spiritually and emotionally isolated so many people around the world in the year 2020.

In Christ,

Fr. Steve Maekawa, OP - Pastor