

## *All Things Work for Good*

Over the past seven weeks, I have been traveling to celebrate Confirmation in Jackson, Green River, Worland, Sheridan, Gillette, Newcastle, Glenrock, and Casper. It is always a joy to visit the youth and celebrate with the Catholics throughout the Diocese of Cheyenne.

The priests, deacons, and parish staff have been working diligently and creatively. I would like to thank them for their good work in challenging circumstances. I have seen their stress and fatigue as they adjust their ministries and seek creative ways to serve the people. We are blessed by their generosity of spirit and creativity. Please offer them words of encouragement and keep them in prayer.

In these days, I am often trying to see what the Lord is doing in the pandemic. I am certain that this time offers new gifts for us. God is always acting – in good times and in bad. St. Paul said, “*We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose*” (Rom. 8:28). All things work for good for those who love God. That is true for times of trial, suffering, and death. Jean Pierre de Caussade said, “*God uses the best and the most delightful, and the worst and most unpleasant.*” We like to think that God only uses what is “most delightful,” but he also uses what is “most unpleasant.”

I urge you to prayerfully discern what God is doing right now in the pandemic. What are new opportunities to serve the elderly, the sick, or those with compromised immune systems. How could we intensify our outreach and communion with them? What if we looked back at this experience and were able to say, “We deepened our bond of communion with those who are on the margins.”

As many people find themselves distanced from the Eucharist, how does the Lord want us to grow in our faith? How should we be accompanying them? One quote that comes to my mind is from the Catechism. It states: “*God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments*” (CCC 1257). The pandemic reminds us of God’s boundless love. Not to under emphasize the grace flowing from the Sacraments; yet God is not bound by his sacraments. The pandemic reminds us of God’s boundless love.

Due to the pandemic, we have a greater awareness that many people come to Mass out of *obligation*, but perhaps they are not coming out of *loving devotion*. They are motivated by the law of the commandments, the Sunday obligation, rather than by a love of the Holy Spirit. How can we use this time to deepen *our* personal relationship with the Holy Spirit? How can we help others to deepen *their* relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit so that the Church is more vibrant? Then evangelization would happen naturally, as people would be attracted by our love and joy.

This time offers new gifts for us. God is always acting – in good times and in bad. “*We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose*” (Rom. 8:28). God uses the best and the most delightful, and the worst and most unpleasant. I urge you to prayerfully discern what God is doing right now in the pandemic.