

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – MARCH 1, 2020

## Dear Parishioners and Families,

Why is the human race the way it is? Why am I the way I am? The Season of Lent propels us into those questions and searching for an answer.

If you focus on the achievements and goodness of the human race, you get one explanation. If one places the emphasis on the conflicts and perils, you make up a different answer.

When you read the first and second chapters of Genesis, everything is positive and upbeat. God creates the entire world; everything is good. God creates man in the image and likeness of God himself. God makes them male and female.

In the second chapter God breathes into man his own breath which is an eternal breath. He places man in a superb estate fit for a king and queen. God makes men and women as social beings not isolated in loneliness.

Chapter three is the opposite of chapter one and two. So much turns bad for the human race as exemplified in Adam and Eve. They walk away from familiarity with God, lose their estate, and have to grind out their existence.

These first three chapters of the bible are pre-history. They are divinely inspired story, accounting for the reality we find in the world and in ourselves. These are stories which touch each one of us.

On Ash Wednesday we were marked with ash. We are invited to rise from our own ashes with God's help to new growth and life. We look forward to the words of Easter Sunday, "He has Risen!"

## **The Coronavirus and Drinking from the Communion Cup**

At the beginning of the influenza season and now with the Coronavirus problem I note the following item that is sent out yearly to the Youngstown Diocese and also to most the other Dioceses in the United States.

**“The Bishop’s Committee on Divine Liturgy in consultation with the Center of Disease Control has stated that under normal circumstances the current procedure (wiping the cup and turning it for the next person) for the distribution of Holy Communion from a Common Cup remains effective and does not increase the risk of infection.”**

Note: Many medical personnel and myself find the above bolded statement misleading, concerning, and medically /scientifically inaccurate.

Several months ago I wrote the Bishop’s Committee on Divine Liturgy to send me the background for that statement. They did so promptly. The background stems from a letter of June 6, 1996 from the CDC. That is twenty-four years ago. The above statement has never been revised or updated.

This week Dr. Cain and I wrote the Center for Disease Control asking them for further information. Do they want their name associated with this statement? Is there any recent scientifically or medically designed studies to point to the safety or risk of drinking from the Common Cup.

People world-wide are taking many precautions against the new virus. However, influenza kills annually around 40,000 in the U.S. which is far more than the virus from China today. This is the reason why with the advice from Dr. Brian Cain we do not offer the Cup to the Congregation. Dr. Cain and I are now waiting for a response from the CDC. We asked their advice on drinking from the Common Cup regardless of whether it is in a religious service or in a communal family setting.

F r. Tom Acker, S.J  
March 1, 2020