

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – MAY 2, 2021

## **Dear Parishioners and Parents,**

Last week I was interviewed by a Public Relations Officer for the Jesuit Order. They wanted to do an article on two Jesuits, one elderly, and one quite new.

I tried to sum up my life in these words: “Life is a mountain climb to the summit. Some days are sunny, some foggy, some stumbling over rock falls, and some in darkness. But, one must always keep climbing, Jesus went before. Follow him!”

People seldom question God when everything is going well. When events go badly, we question and often lose perspective.

The Gospel today has an interesting statement as Jesus talks about the vine and the branches. The Father is the vine grower and Jesus is the vine. It is the next statement that strikes me. “The Father takes away every branch that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes to bear more fruit.”

God wants results. God wants fruit from the vine, not simply words. The second part of that statement brings some fright.

Every branch that produces fruit he will prune to bear more fruit. Pruning hurts. When we are pruned, we hurt and wonder why the pruning, why the pain. In the Lord’s words, it is to produce more fruit.

This is also the Lord’s response after the Resurrection. He tells his disciples, “Wasn’t it necessary the Lord should suffer and in this way enter into his glory?” Glory is the manifestation of God’s holiness and God’s power. In the suffering we are being prepared for a manifestation of God’s holiness and God’s power.

## **Summary of Dialogue Homily of Fr. Tom with Brian Cain, M.D.**

1. Please get vaccinated. All three products (Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson and Johnson) are safe. The concern about the latter is so limited that the benefit of vaccination majorly outweighs the slight drawback of very rare blood clots.
2. If anticipating pregnancy or if pregnant, get vaccinated unless you have something rare. The antibodies will be beneficial to the baby. We know that the antibodies are passed positively through breast milk.
3. The virus is passed generally through droplets expressed through mouth. Good ventilation using the fans of our church is helpful to limit the virus because it disperses the virus and reduces the load any person gets. Good ventilation dries out the viral coat more quickly.
4. Surface contamination is very low. The excessive wiping except for door knobs not necessary. Report from CDC.
5. Returning to an obligation for Mass too early may run afoul of the Health Directives. We cannot crowd the churches. Allow people to make their own decision since the fear factor is so personal to each person. Fr. Acker speaks rather of the Mass as opportunity rather than obligation.
6. Keep every other pew empty as now doing. Distance does make a difference.
7. Wear Masks if possible. This is a request. Fr. Acker does not intend to police this but encourages mask wearing as the church begins to fill up.
8. Spikes in the virus are worrisome with the variants. Right now this is happening in India. Again, get vaccinated.
9. The Gospel of the Good Shepherd is relevant. Jesus lays down his life for his sheep. If you are worried about the very small personal risk of the vaccine, think of the others whom you might infect if you do not get vaccinated. Please get vaccinated.
10. If you have a particular medical condition, call your doctor for advice about receiving the vaccination.
11. Our church is filling up more each week. The best protection for the flock is vaccination.
12. Excessive use of hand sanitizer dries out the skin and can leave you more exposed. The skin has a natural protective coat. Every time you touch someone is not an occasion to sanitize.
13. Dr. Cain, Carol Cain (wife and Nurse) and Fr. Acker are vaccinated. Fr. Acker intends to continue to consult Dr. Cain for this parish since he is local and respected.