

On May 11<sup>th</sup> the emergency status of Covid ended officially which affects us at St. Elizabeth of the Trinity in some ways liturgically. The Vicar General's office has approved parishes for reintroducing certain things that had been restricted during Covid.

What's changing at Sunday Mass?

We will use the "passing" baskets during the collection and not the pole baskets that the ushers held the whole time. There is plenty of sanitizer present for you to use before Holy Communion if desired, the passing baskets are deemed safe either way. The use of these baskets will make the collection process more efficient but does require congregants to be aware to receive and then pass the basket, after a moment of generosity of course!

The sign of peace with a handshake has practically returned for many but is now officially allowed again. Please be understanding though if those around you are not comfortable with touch right now but would prefer a gesture and smile of peace instead. We want to be as understanding of others around us, we don't know their own health situation or the concern they may have for a sick or elderly loved one.

Perhaps most importantly, the Precious Blood is allowed to be distributed again through a common cup. This allowance is the most significant in terms of our faith, for Jesus is fully present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, under the appearance of either the bread or the wine. While we don't receive any added grace from receiving under both species, the sign value is there and the Lord Himself says: "Take this" for His Body and Blood.

Of course, people might have reservations about receiving from the common cup, so before we reintroduce the Precious Blood to the congregation at Sunday Masses, we would like your feedback. Over the course of the next few weeks, there are response forms in the pews with pencils and in the vestibule for you to tell us if you would receive from the common cup for the Precious Blood if it was offered. There will be a drop box near the baptismal font by the gift table. We ask for your first name and initial of your last name, please submit only once for yourself, but you can submit feedback on behalf of your spouse or a child for convenience. Please only submit once so we can get an estimate of the need and plan accordingly.

Today is the feast of the Ascension when, as St. Luke reminds us, after having spent forty days with the disciples, the risen Lord ascended by His own divine power into heavenly glory. The disciples were to await the promised gift of the Holy Spirit that the Father and Son would send. In some ways the Ascension can be seen as an extension of Easter, and prelude to Pentecost and is like Christ the King when we celebrate Jesus as King of all creation. But what can we learn from this feast day itself?

When the Son of God ascended body and soul into heaven it was the first time our nature, a human nature, had been in heaven. Christ hasn't abandoned us but has opened the gates of heaven to all who believe in Him. One of the beautiful names for the Eucharist is "*the pledge or promise of future glory.*" We have been promised a share in the Divine Life. St. Paul prays for us that we may know and appreciate this: "***May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in Christ's inheritance among the holy ones.***"

God bless,

Fr. Mike

