

## *St. Benedict Parish*

October 10, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

My wishes for a very Happy Thanksgiving weekend to you and your family. Even in the midst of this coronavirus pandemic, if we make a personal inventory of our blessings, I'm sure there is plenty to be thankful for. Many folks have even found a silver lining in the pandemic.

However, we have all been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, whether through isolation, illness or financial challenges. Please do not hesitate to contact one of the parish staff or me if we can assist you during these challenging times.

As you know, from mid-March to June St. Benedict church was closed. Cardinal Thomas Collins regretted having to close all Toronto parishes, and never wants to do it again. The closure was not solely based on governmental orders, but it was the right thing to do charity-wise in protecting parishioners from the spread of the virus.

Since our re-opening in June, we are proud to have ensured a safe environment for worship here at St. Benedict through the hard work of many volunteer cleaners, ushers, in addition to the continued ministries of lectors, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and musicians.

Social distancing has impacted attendance at Sunday Masses. Attendance is smaller than before (currently about 25 per cent of normal - with socially distanced seating in the church and parish hall). There are a number of parishioners who watch Cardinal Collins celebrate Mass on the Archdiocesan website. And, there are other live-streamed Masses available.

As you could imagine, the pandemic has had a negative impact on our financial health in 2020. St. Benedict parish has been greatly helped by a government subsidy during these months, but this financial help is being weaned away from us, and we will soon be on our own.

As we move into the fall season, we remain in a time of great uncertainty about the pandemic's direction and the possibility of another church closure. Remember that whether the church itself remains open or closed, we are always ready to assist you or a family member via telephone message or email. When working remotely, we monitor our messages daily.

To help St. Benedict parish financially please consider switching your support of the parish to **Pre-Authorized Giving** (PAG forms available through our parish website). You also could give by credit card, for a single or monthly donation. Look on our parish website ([stbenedicts.ca](http://stbenedicts.ca)) for the donate button at the upper right of the webpage. Also, soon you will be able to use our new touchless debit/credit card machine for processing one-time donations to the parish. Once the machine arrives, you will be able to visit the parish office to make use of this new system.

Once again, a very Happy Thanksgiving to you. Our gatherings may be smaller, but our celebration of God's blessings can still be grand. I am thankful for you and what you mean to St. Benedict parish. Stay healthy. I'm praying for you.

*Fr. Dave*