

Vital Grandin Chaplaincy message from the chaplain.

3rd Sunday of Lent

Dear Faithful, as you know, I moved to a new residence. As a result there is a lot of chaos at my new place and I was not able to print out the bulletins and propers for this Sunday. You will be able to download the bulletin for this week from our new website www.vitalgrandinchaplaincy.ca

I would like to bring to your attention a few things though.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Preventive Measures in Place in the Archdiocese of Edmonton

As you may know, *at this time, Archbishop Smith is requesting that all parishes implement the following measures on a temporary basis:*

- *At the Sign of Peace, refrain from shaking hands – a simple bow, nod, or “Peace be with you” to your neighbour is appropriate.*
- *All holy water fonts are to remain empty.*
- *The Precious Blood is not to be distributed from the chalice.*
- *Non-Eucharistic activities at the parish will be cancelled if we expect more than 250 attendees.*

*Experts in public health have advised that there is **no** greater risk of infection in receiving the host on the tongue than there is in receiving in the hand. Communicants are free to receive either way. However, for people’s greater peace of mind, priests should offer a dedicated line for communicants who prefer to receive on the tongue.*

The Vital Grandin Chaplaincy, for the moment, is only affected by the second and fourth measure. As you can see, we will still be allowed to receive on the tongue, and this is the only way that one can receive at a Tridentine Mass, according to the wisdom of ecclesiastical law. Were this to change, and communion on the tongue were to be forbidden in the diocese (and this is unfortunately happening in many places throughout the world at this time) we have been instructed by our superiors that communion itself will not be distributed at all during our masses and the faithful will be instructed on how to make a good spiritual communion.

Sunday Obligation

Out of consideration for the well-being of others in the community, Archbishop Smith advises that the elderly, anyone with an underlying health condition, and those who feel even slightly unwell are excused from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass.

Celebrations of the Mass

*On March 12, the Chief Medical Officer of Health specifically **excluded** places of worship from her recommendation against gatherings of more than 250 people. Therefore, parishes should continue with weekday and Sunday masses for the time being.*

I would like to take this opportunity also to address a couple of issues regarding communion on the tongue as well as Sunday obligation.

As regards to communion on the tongue I need to remind you that there is a proper way to receive our Lord during communion: receiving with our eyes closed. The vast majority of communicants in this chaplaincy already do that. They close their eyes, open their mouths, and slightly stick out their tongues. If everybody were to receive in this way there will be no chance that the priest will ever touch the communicant's tongue. However as some of you know, the priest sometimes does touch a communicant's tongue. The reason why this is so is because the communicant does not close his eyes! They perceive the host is approaching and make a small motion of the head towards the host in order to take the host into their mouth. They do this instinctively as they see the host right in front of them, and then move towards it to take it on their tongue. Normally this is done in a split second, and it is done at the last instant, just as the host is approaching their mouth. As this is happening my hand is moving towards them and what rarely results from this is that their tongue will touch my finger.

It is absolutely essential in this time that we reduce as much as we can this possibility. So I insist that everybody receive with their eyes closed. After all this is the way the Church, throughout the century, has always told her children to receive our Lord.

As for Sunday obligation, we need to distinguish between the ecclesiastical precept which we know well; that Catholics are bound under pain of Sin to go to Mass on Sunday, from the divine law found in the 10 commandments; Thou shalt remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day. Dear faithful the Ecclesiastical precept can be dispensed by those who have the faculties to do so. The bishop can do this and as you see in his communique (above) he has done so under those conditions. I myself have these faculties. So if you are not sure you can always contact me and I can dispense you as well for a good reason. Therefore there is no excuse for anyone who has the least chance of having the coronavirus, or any other related reason, to attend mass. Missing mass in this case will not result in any sin.

However the Divine command still remains and that cannot be dispensed, therefore were you to be dispensed and not go to mass on Sunday, you would still have the divine obligation to make the day holy. This is usually done by increasing your prayers, praying together, or even watching mass on tv or livesteam.

In this time of uncertainty we need to be prudent dear faithful, and we need to not play any part in making it harder for us to receive the sacraments.

God bless you

Fr. Massimo Botta
Chaplain