

Corpus Christi Parish
PHONE: (250) 765-6869
E-mail: corpuschristikelowna@shaw.ca
www.corpuschristikelowna.com
September 3, 2020

Dear Parishioners;

Well I was listening to our star Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie today, and apart from her signal call to Be Calm, Be Kind and Be Safe, she has declared September 1st the beginning of our fall Pandemic season. It was cool today but it is going to heat up again and feel just like midsummer. I appreciate her caution but Labour Day is still a week away. So I can only imagine that Dr. Bonnie has the opening of our schools weighing mightily upon her shoulders.

Among other roles, I am the Episcopal Vicar for Schools for our Diocese. My mother thinks that I should have some business cards made up so that when I go to Toronto I could pass them out and impress her friends. I remember years and years ago when I was first elected something and it was as the Dean of the West Kootenays. I told my Dad and he was mightily impressed. He said he was going to tell everyone about it, until I pointed out that unlike in the Archdiocese of Toronto where Deans are often Auxiliary Bishops, Nelson was a small Diocese and everyone eventually gets a turn at the job, whether they like it or not. And he said; "Well then I won't tell them that part."

So I am the vicar of schools but since I don't have kids or teach in the classrooms, I have to work at understanding just how challenging this new and unique school year will be for all involved.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of working directly with the staffs at four of our seven schools. And I have always been not just impressed with our employees, I have always found them to be a source of inspiration. They could work wherever they like and yet they choose to work in our school system, even though we are not able to provide them with the same compensation as they would get elsewhere.

We try our best but in this province, we only get half the funding a public school receives to operate, and we get nothing to cover our capital costs for the land, buildings and upkeep. So it is a constant hustle to keep up. Which is why I can say that without the quality of teachers and support staffs that we have been

blessed with, we would be lost. They love their work and the opportunity they have to serve God and the faith and for that grace, we are grateful.

Educators by nature love to plan and to know what is expected of them and what lies ahead. So you can imagine just how hard this year will be for all educators across the province, our country and the world. It is a big enough responsibility to educate and to nurture the kids, but now they have to work to keep them and themselves safe from Covid-19. So we should keep them in our daily prayers.

And I can only imagine how tough it must be for the parents of school age kids, and especially those families that are fortunate enough to have grandparents in their family bubbles. Some of us are good at sizing up the situation and deciding what needs to be done and then getting on with what needs doing. And some of us are worry warts and who stay up nights considering all of the possible repercussions of our decisions, and never resting easy.

What everyone should know is the school communities have been working extremely hard putting together their action plans and educating everyone involved in the life of the schools as to the best practises of running a school amidst this pandemic. And that as long as everyone does their part, we will be able to say, come what may, that we did our best. And no one can ask more of us than that.

I came across this prayer for a new school year;

Almighty Father, as we begin this new school year, we ask for your blessing for all concerned. Open their minds as they learn about the glory of your creation, grant them courage as they accept new challenges and help us all to play our part in shaping our communities. We give you thanks for the opportunities that lie before us and for the support of our families and friends. And we pray for all those around the world who do not have a school to go to, and who are caught up in struggles that are beyond their control. Comfort and support those who suffer and give them hope and strength to work for a better future. We ask for this through Jesus our brother and friend. Amen.

May God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever.

Pat Monette/Pastor