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Dear Parishioners;

We have to get this letter out early this week since Friday is a holiday so I have to write faster than normal so try and keep up.

And I know what some of you are thinking; “Is he going to keep writing these letters and will I have to keep reading them once Lent is over? And, is there going to be a test once we are back at church?”

Well, my advice to you is, suck it up buttercup. If it’s too hard for you to read all at once, then read it a page a day. But never in the bathroom. We can’t be that short of supplies. Besides, I’ve got only so many descent ideas. Pretty soon you’ll only be getting a postcard.

So, we are entering the biggest week of the year with Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil Saturday night and of course, Easter Sunday. There are many places to find these services offered on line or the TV (Salt and Light). And you can find all of what our diocese is offering at www.nelsondiocese.org

As you plan your week, I want you to keep this in mind; watching services online or on the TV is a learned skill, it doesn’t come easily to a lot of us. Sometimes I still flinch when I think about what it was like attending mass with my parents as a kid. Nobody cared if you were board and if you got caught looking around, you’d get a wack for your trouble. Watching the mass on TV has got to be better than that.

And the problem with trying to watch services on TV or the computer is that we are surrounded by distractions. The kitchen is just over there and some other channel is just a click away. And if

there is someone in the house who isn't as interested as we are, they won't shut up long enough for us to feel that we have earned our grace.

Keep in mind that the service will always be shorter than normal because there is no Sign of Peace, there is no Communion and of course, there is no collection. (Sorry, I had to leave my computer for a moment to have a little cry.)

My advice to you is to stick with it. But at the same time, adjust your expectations. Don't be hard on yourself and try looking for one idea or thought that strikes you in the readings or if you are lucky, the sermon, and stay with it even as the service continues. It is not about getting to the end of the service without bailing out, it is about being open to a suggestion from the Holy Spirit and being encouraged.

The advantage of being at home is that you can relax and not have to look like you are paying attention, so go ahead and even close your eyes and let the Spirit encourage you with that one thought and then let the familiar words and rituals be a comfort. If you are able to get something from the service that the Holy Spirit is able to encourage, then it will mean a lot more for you. You will feel blessed and renewed.

St. Theresa of Lisieux talked about how annoying one of the sisters was as she was in the chapel trying to say her rosary. She really wanted to say something to the other sister, but as she always seemed to do, she figured out that putting up with the distraction and biting her tongue, was more useful to her spiritual growth than being able to keep her focus right to the end of the rosary.

And I just remembered a time when I was in the seminary and the guy behind me keep adding the word "Please" in the Hail Mary so that he was saying; "*Please* pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Well let me tell you, the hour of his death was getting closer by the minute and I did speak to him afterwards. Even St. Theresa would have had trouble with that guy. Which only goes

to prove that I still have things to work on, so enough about me let's move on.

In the same way, don't forget that our brains are like high performance race cars. Our brains are going a mile a minute, and we need them to. The thing about a race car is that it handles better at top speed, and so do our brains. So trying to maneuver a race car through a hospital zone is really a lot tougher for the driver. And so it is for the brain.

Trying to shut the brain off for a few quiet moments of prayer is not easy. That is why some people like St. Theresa are attracted to the life in a monastery, because the quiet life makes a prayer life easier. As long as no one is rattling their rosary beads behind you.

Well, we aren't monks. God has called us to live in the mess of the day to day world and with that comes a ton of distractions and frustrations. What we have to trust, is that the Holy Spirit is able to speak to each human heart, even ones that get distracted easily, even hearts that are broken, and even and especially to those hearts that are being worn thin by all of the troubles of the day.

The following is the great hymn that we sing at Pentecost. It reminds us of the place that the Holy Spirit has in our lives, even and especially when we are feeling overwhelmed or we are feeling that God isn't paying close enough attention. I would save it for Pentecost but we have got to be out of this by then. And hopefully it will remind us all that no matter where we are in our remembering this week, Jesus is, and always will be, victorious.

Before I let you go, I just wanted to say that of all of the services of Holy Week, my favourite is Holy Thursday. It is the night we remember the last supper and what is referred to as the institution of the Eucharist. I am always amazed that rather than highlighting the role that the priest plays in our community, we remember the washing of the feet, the bowing down of Jesus in the servant's role.

“So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.” (John ch 13 v15)

As we make our way through this most Holy of Weeks, we'll remember all those who have washed our feet over the years and especially those that we have forgotten or never knew. We'll entrust to God's care all those feet that we should be washing with a generous heart, and we'll remember all those who are washing our feet now, by putting themselves in harms way to keep us safe and to keep us fed.

May the Holy Spirit remind us of just how blessed we are in spite of our most recent troubles, and may God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever. Happy Easter.

Pat Monette
Pastor