

A letter from the Pastor with an article from Dr. Mike Janda

My dear friends in Christ,

Last Wednesday we were put on lockdown by the county because we are again in Purple Tier. I was not surprised that this happened considering our attitude in dealing and responding with the Coronavirus.

Our guest on our Faith Hour last Wednesday was Dr. Mike Janda, a parishioner and Director, Public Health Laboratory, Kern County. He has worked extensively with the CDC in developing ways to combat infectious diseases. He has been a great resource for our community. The following day, I asked him to write an article regarding the confusing and very disturbing reality of this Coronavirus. Here it is:

“Coronavirus Pandemic, USA, November 2020”

Right now, we are experiencing the most serious phase of the coronavirus pandemic in the USA to date. Cases in all 50 states are up, over 11 million cases confirmed since March, 250,000 deaths, and an estimated 3 million people walking around with coronavirus that don't know they have it. Projected numbers by February of 2021 are staggering unless we do something. Why is this happening now? There are many reasons. Many states fail to require any safeguards or protection for residents such as the use of face masks. Younger people continue to hold group parties, attend large-scale weddings, frequent bars and gyms, and socially gather in unacceptable numbers putting others at high risk. Others ignore state rules and socialize on holidays (Fourth of July, Halloween) without protection. Finally, we have no federal or national plan with directives regarding how to attempt to control the spread of the disease in this country.

The St. Joseph's parish has an important role in trying to protect themselves, as well as the Pinole community, and the nation. Masking in public is critical. KN95 masks are better than surgical masks (blue) which are better than fabric masks. If you are going to wear fabric masks, they must contain at least three layers of material to even be partially effective. Most fabric masks can be washed. Masks need to cover both the nose and mouth. If the nose is not covered masks are useless. Social distancing is important as well. While early data suggested that a distance of 6 ft was acceptable many studies now indicate a minimum of 10 ft should be the standard. Hand hygiene should be practiced as well. Most importantly we need to do something we all do not want to do, that is, refrain from parties on holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas) or special occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries. If we don't do these things the pandemic will continue and we will not be able to go to the movies, attend sporting events, eat at our favorite restaurants, or shop as we did before March of 2020.

There is hope on the horizon. First, if we as a community do the right thing (masks, social distancing) infection rates will go down and communities will be allowed to open up again. Secondly, vaccines should soon be approved by the FDA and available to the general public as early as April of 2021. These vaccines should be protective to 90%-95% of persons. Finally, a new administration in 2021 will take a leadership role nationally on guidelines and mandates to control the coronavirus pandemic in all 50 states. If all these things occur, we can begin to get together as we did previously as the St Joseph's community and worship in church again.”

(Dr. Mike Janda, November 19, 2020)

I would like to thank you once more for your wonderful support and great understanding in dealing with many issues of our parish community.

I will continue to follow the guidelines from the diocese and from the county when it comes to the well-being of our community. I know that many of us have not fully understood the magnitude of this Coronavirus. Because of this, many tend to minimize the importance of following the guidelines and recommendations set forth by the state and county officials. We are all going to benefit when we cooperate and not just think about ourselves. Many continue to argue that their personal freedom is being violated by having to require wearing of mask in public especially when you are in a group setting. It is common sense. I am sure you don't want to be at the receiving end of this Coronavirus.

You know now that as of Wednesday, we don't have again indoor masses. We have however outdoor masses on Saturday, Spanish Mass at 4pm, Sunday at 8am and 12nn masses. 10am mass is livestreaming only on YouTube channel and on Facebook page. From 1pm to 2pm, we have communion for those who attend the livestreaming mass.

I ask for your continued patience and understanding. Together we rise again. But we really need to do our part. Always be kind and compassionate. Love those who are difficult to love especially during this pandemic.

Last Sunday I announced that the Thanksgiving Day Mass will be live only on YouTube and on Facebook. Someone, after the 12nn outdoor mass last Sunday, suggested if it would be possible to have an outdoor mass instead. Without hesitation I said YES! Therefore, this **Thanksgiving Day Mass will be an OUTDOOR MASS at 10am in the school yard.** Bring your BASKET OF BREAD AND WINE to be blessed by me for your dinner gathering. I look forward to celebrating with you that day.

As always please continue to check our website: sjcpinole.church, for update and new information.

May you have a wonderful and fulfilling Thanksgiving Day celebration!

Your humble servant,

Fr. Geoffrey