



The Reverend Dana R. Christensen

12 April 2020
Easter Sunday

Dear Parish Family,

The Lord is Risen, Alleluia, Alleluia! Since this past summer when I started noticing symptoms of ALS in the weakening of my hands and arms, I have often referred to it as “my hands are no longer obeying my head.” This has, in a very real way taught me something about the virtue of obedience. A body whose limbs no longer obey the head is not healthy. Christ is the head of the Church, and we His body. When we fail to obey Him, we bring dysfunction to the Body of Christ. The same is seen in microcosm in a diocese with the Bishop as head and priests as his limbs. If a priest is not joyfully obedient to the lawful authority his bishop has over him, dysfunction enters in.

St. Benedict, my patron says that if we wish to fight under the banner of Christ the King we must do so in obedience. He says the weapon by which we fight for the Kingship of Christ is obedience. Since I desire nothing more than the reign of Christ the King, I must choose to be obedient.

In my prayer, in discussion with Bishop DeGrood, and my doctors it has become obvious that God is asking me to step back from some of the tasks that have been entrusted to me. My conversations with the bishop revolved around my current and future physical limitations, the current pandemic, and the need to make sure parishioners and the Nuns receive adequate pastoral care. While I struggle with the idea of stepping back, I know it is what God is asking of me. So, as a warrior fighting under the banner of the King, I choose to obey. It is bittersweet. Bitter because it requires a death to self, but sweet in that I know I am doing God’s will, and doing God’s will always brings joy. It is God Who knows what is best for us. As St. Teresa of Avila said in speaking of how we must abandon ourselves to God’s will, “This is our mistake: not abandoning ourselves entirely to what the Lord does, for He knows best what is fitting for us.”

So, in obedience to Gods Holy Will, I have submitted my resignation to Bishop DeGrood effective May 1. The Bishop has appointed Fr. Ken Lulf to be pastor in addition to being pastor of Holy Family in Mitchell. He has also appointed Msgr. Charles Mangan and myself as Parochial Vicar. Msgr. Mangan will reside in Emery, and I will continue to live in Alexandria. I look forward to continuing to serve here, albeit in a different role and according to my current health situation. I have full confidence in Fr. Ken who has been so helpful to me and our parishes in recent days.

Please pray for me, Fr. Ken and Msgr. Mangan as we navigate this change. Know of my prayers for all of you.

Entrusting all of us to the crucified and risen Lord I remain,

Yours in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

The Rev. Dana R. Christensen
Pastor

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