



January 31, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

I trust you continue to be well. Hopefully, you are continuing to follow the guidelines of the CDC by wearing a facemask, keeping a proper social distance of at least six feet when in public and washing your hands regularly. Please take the vaccine when it becomes available for you for the safety of all.

The on-going reality of the impact of the coronavirus is still having its effects on the way we are able to celebrate the Mass and other liturgical gatherings.

**ASH WEDNESDAY AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES:** We recently received a set of directives from the diocese about the proper distribution of ashes this year.

*“On January 12, 2021, Robert Cardinal Sarah, the Prefect of the Congregation of Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, issued a note entitled “Distribution of Ashes in Time of Pandemic”. In that document, Cardinal Sarah gives the following instruction to the clergy:*

*The Priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel”, or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”.*

*The Priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places. The Priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything. . .*

***Because of the instruction from Cardinal Sarah and due to the current state of the pandemic, this year the Diocese of Rockville Centre will administer ashes to the faithful by sprinkling the blessed ashes on the top of the head of the recipient. This is the traditional practice of the Roman Rite, and is currently observed in Rome, throughout Europe, and in various other parts of the world. This method, rooted in the scriptural tradition, will allow for ashes to be given easily without making physical contact.”***

Therefore, in keeping with the directive that we have received, ashes will be distributed by the sprinkling of ashes on the top of the heads of those who come forward to receive them and not in the traditional way of the minister making the sign of the cross on the forehead of each person, as we are accustomed to receiving them.

**ONCE AGAIN SEAT RESERVATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED TO ATTEND EACH OF THE MASSES OR SERVICES ON ASH WEDNESDAY.** If you are planning to attend a Mass or Service on Ash Wednesday, please reserve a seat on our parish website. If you need assistance, please call the parish office. **For the safety of all there will be a limit of 250 people at each celebration.**

**Please Note: While this is an important annual celebration there is no requirement to attend Mass and to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday.**

*Fr. John*