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Vicar for Priests

Date: November 19, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Update

Today I participated in Governor Parson's teleconference regarding the pandemic. The Governor clearly indicated that the cases are growing at a rapid pace. For example, in one month, we have equaled the last eight months. During the first half of November, we have equaled all the cases in October.

The Governor clearly indicated that he will not shut down the state nor the churches. He indicated that this was not the place of government. He stressed, however, that if people are sick, they should not be going to church or other public places. These next four to six weeks will be very important to curve the spread of the virus. He asked all religious leaders to remind their people to practice social distancing, use hand sanitizer, wash their hands, and to wear a facemask.

Dr. Randall Williams, Director of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, indicated that the vaccines will begin to arrive in Missouri in December, beginning in ten locations throughout the state, which will be announced later. There are two 95% positive vaccines at this time, Pfizer and Moderna. The Pfizer vaccine needs to be stored in extreme deep storage, while regular freezers are sufficient for the Moderna vaccine. Therefore, it might be that the Pfizer vaccine will be in cities where deep freezing is available, and Moderna vaccine in the other more rural areas. Dr. Williams concluded that by August of 2020 everyone who wants to receive a vaccine would be able to receive one. The tentative schedule for the state of Missouri is for the elderly (anyone over the age of 65), teachers, medical professionals, and first responders to receive the vaccine first. The months of April and May will be for the general public.

As of today, there are 257,852 COVID cases in the state of Missouri. There have been 3,507 deaths and 2,865,173 tests given.

The Governor has extended the Emergency Executive Order until March 31, 2021. Please see the attached Governor's Press Release.