

August 2 2020
Perfect love casts out fear

When a state of emergency was declared in the middle of March and non-essential services were closed, there was a great sense of panic. For whatever reason, people started to buy in large numbers items that would be in large supply. Line ups at the grocery stores, rationing of these items, it all felt like it was out of a movie. During this time, I had no desire to venture to one these grocery stores. I had a lot of frozen leftovers to keep me nourished. Over time though, you start missing fresh foods. So, online grocery delivery and meal services was the way to go. However, at a certain point, I needed to go to a grocery market to pick things up. At first, I was hesitant. What would it be like? Do I really want to stand in line to get some lactose free milk? Becoming more aware of these thoughts, I began to realize, there was a lot of fear dictating my actions and the line from the movie Shawshank Redemption came to mind, “Get busy living or get busy dying”. I finally went to a grocery store and it was so strange. But, over time going to the grocery store more frequently, my fear left and I felt comfortable enough to go more regularly to get items I would need for the week.

As we are just over a month since we re-opened our Church, the slow progression of numbers has brought me great joy. Our first weekend we were at 48% of our total capacity for the three Masses. As weeks progressed we maxed out at over 65% of our total capacity for the three Masses. (That percentage will increase if we take into account the limiting factor due to physical distancing). Feedback, in general, has been positive and now we are at the point of reaching physical distancing capacity and turning people away at the door. A new, but good, problem to have with solutions on the way.

For many, there might be questions around safety coming to Church. I can assure you, and from the feedback that I have heard, people feel more safe in Church than they do in a grocery store. That speaks largely to our parish leadership and volunteers who have worked so hard to keep our parish a healthy and welcoming environment while balancing the restrictions placed upon us due to the pandemic.

If there is anxiety that is holding you back, why not come to a less crowded Mass on the weekday? Our weekday Mass attendance is usually around 20 people and you get to choose where you sit. By this point, everyone knows the rules of 6ft/2m distancing and everyone is respectful of those boundaries. By law, masks are mandatory in the Church which as we are told adds another level of feeling safe.

As we enter phase 3 of the provincial re-opening plan, we pray that all who are still anxious to join us at Mass may take those small steps to come and worship with the parish community. In the first letter of St. John we read that perfect love casts out fear. That love is found in a tiny white Host, the Eucharist. Allow our Lord, present in the Blessed Sacrament, grant you peace, nourish your soul, and give you courage.

Father Michael Simoes