



February 11, 2021

Dear Parishioners and Acquaintances in the Diocese and Beyond:

Good morning to all my dear people who have been so supportive for me with the blood cancer that I have. As I write this message Wednesday evening, you might be aware that tomorrow is the *Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes*; also The World Day of the Sick. The diocese has sent out the Holy Father Pope Francis's message for this World Day of the Sick that I would highly recommend that you look at it. Lourdes was one place I wished to have seen years ago when I was on a European explorer tour; a gift when I first left Ascension Parish for the first time back in 2004.

I would like to highlight in Section 3 of Pope Francis's message, where he says, "Here I wish to mention the importance of fraternal solidarity, which is expressed concretely in service and can take a variety of forms, all directed at supporting our neighbors. "Serving means caring...for the vulnerable of our families, our society, our people (Homily in Havana, 20 September 2015) In this outreach all are "called to set aside their own wishes and desires, their pursuit of power, before the concrete gaze of those who are most vulnerable...Service always looks at their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness and even, in some cases, 'suffers' that closeness and tries to help them. Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people." (ibid.)

I thought this was an excellent section of the message as it highlights fraternity, caring for the venerable, and one's neighbor. We are a people of faith and are members of a faith community that as Pope Francis says, caring for its members in service. The statement that Pope Francis said that truly resonates in my life is the last sentence in the highlighted section. "Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people.

## Church of the Ascension

887 Wembley Road • Parksville, B.C. • V9P 2E6

Tel.: 250-248-3747 • Fax: 250-248-2732 • Email: ascensionparish@shaw.ca

This week I had a call from the Leukemia/BMT program at Vancouver General for an appointment in Vancouver regarding Stem Cell replacement. Even better, it has been arranged that on March 17<sup>th</sup>, St. Patrick's Feast Day, the appointment will be via Zoom here at the house. This is good news, as I have been talking to people who have gone through the same blood cancer, and have done well with their own stem cell replacement.

In closing, I continue giving to you my heartfelt appreciation for all the prayers you are saying, the beautiful cards, the emails and your love and support you are sending to me and the family.

Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Mike*