

Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

*Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,
Sparwood at 9am Sunday morning,
and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.*



The Sunday Mass is broadcast via Zoom from Fernie & Sparwood (see below).

Dear All,

I hope you are well. We got quite a storm this week, but it was followed by some lovely sunshine which was most appreciated and really lifted my spirits.

First Reading

In our gospel reading this Sunday we will hear how the first three of Jesus' disciples started to follow Jesus, this will include Peter's first meeting with Jesus. But my sermon will focus on the first reading (*right*) from the first book of Samuel.

The idea of hearing and following God's call is a very familiar theme, but I think our first reading this weekend helps us see more clearly the whole issue of being a servant of God. While the extract from the life of Samuel that we read is very quaint, when we look at the whole story of Eli and Samuel it makes far less comfortable reading! Yet it is a reminder of both God's unfailing love for us and that the Kingdom of God isn't built by apathy or by turning a blind eye to wrongdoings. It is a stark reminder that our Christian faith calls us to be Christ-like and different from the world.

So as we respond to the Psalm this weekend with the words, "***Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will***", this has meaning, and a cost – as Peter found out as he went out into the world as Christ's representative; but really, compared with the gift of seeing the Kingdom being built around us, it is great value for our labours.

First reading for Sunday

1 Samuel 3:3-10,19

Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord, where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" He answered, "Here I am." Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, since you called me." Eli said, "I did not call. Go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. Once again the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, since you called me." He replied, "I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down." Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, since you called me." Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him and let no word of his fall to the ground.

Covid Restrictions and Vaccinations

Two interesting things this week. Firstly, in England the importance of spiritual health is being recognised even at government levels. My Bishop in England told us that government officials “*noted that keeping Covid-secure places of worship open for public worship adds no extra burden to the National Health Service and provides recognised benefits for the community.*” The fact that in British Columbia the Churches do not appear to be acknowledged as having any significant value to the community – certainly less value than pubs and bars – is so clearly a blind spot in our society and something that we must continue to raise with any politician or civil leader that we come into contact with. I have to say that I am dismayed that the B.C. government has not recognised that ‘*Covid-secure places of worship*’ are not a danger to the community but rather an overall ‘*benefit for the community*’. We might want to reflect upon whether faith and church are now so marginalised in our society that they are considered – to use Dr. Bonnie Henry’s word – “non-essential” and even insignificant. Clearly we have a lot of work to do to awaken others to the centrality of our message for meaningful life! A small quote from Bp. Mark’s letter is attached below.

Secondly, Matteo Bruni, director of the Holy See Press Office said, “I can confirm that as part of the vaccination programme of the Vatican City State, as of today [Thursday 14th January], the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine has been administered to Pope Francis and to the Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI”.

Vatican News went on to say that the vaccination campaign in the Vatican began on Wednesday and that the Pope had referred to the vaccination as “*an ethical action, because you are gambling with your health, you are gambling with your life, but you are also gambling with the lives of others.*”

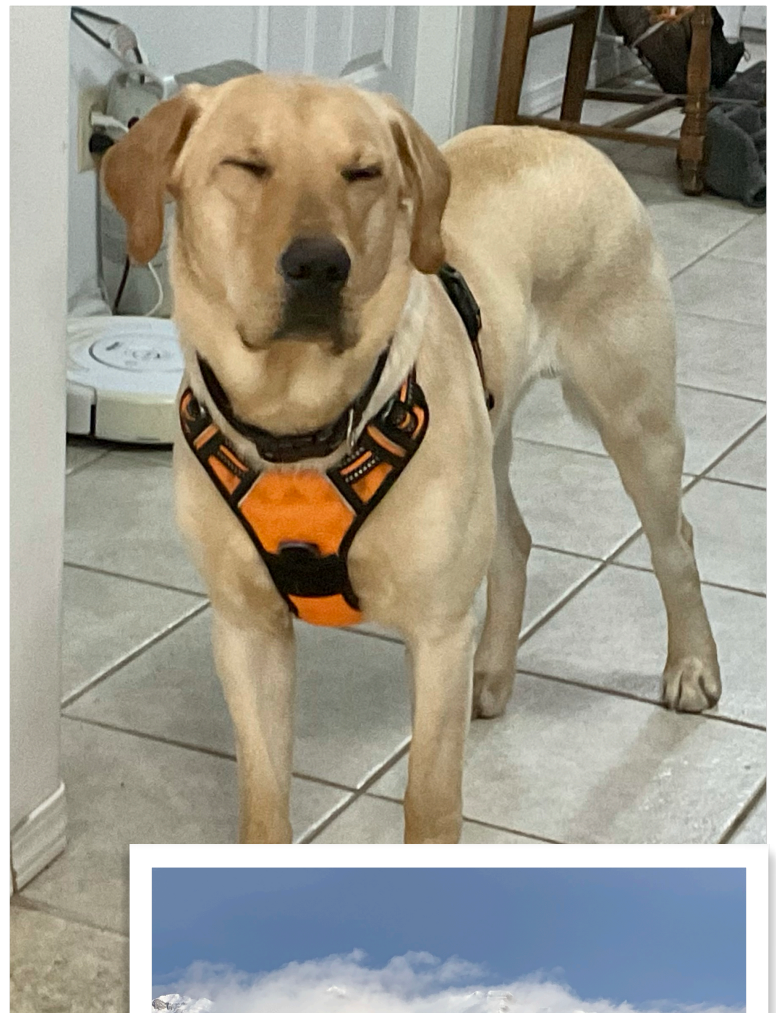
We look forward to when the vaccine is available to many more of us.

As there is some worries about the moral standing of the vaccines that are being rolled out, I will attach at the end a statement from the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I quote it in full so you can see clearly the Church’s position on the vaccines.



Very Many thanks

The picture right is Thumper with eyes close as he awaits yet another Christmas treat. As he gets so excited about treats, I have spaced them out for him so he is still receiving them. And this week I was still finishing off the bird – that is, with the obligatory turkey soup... or was it chicken soup?



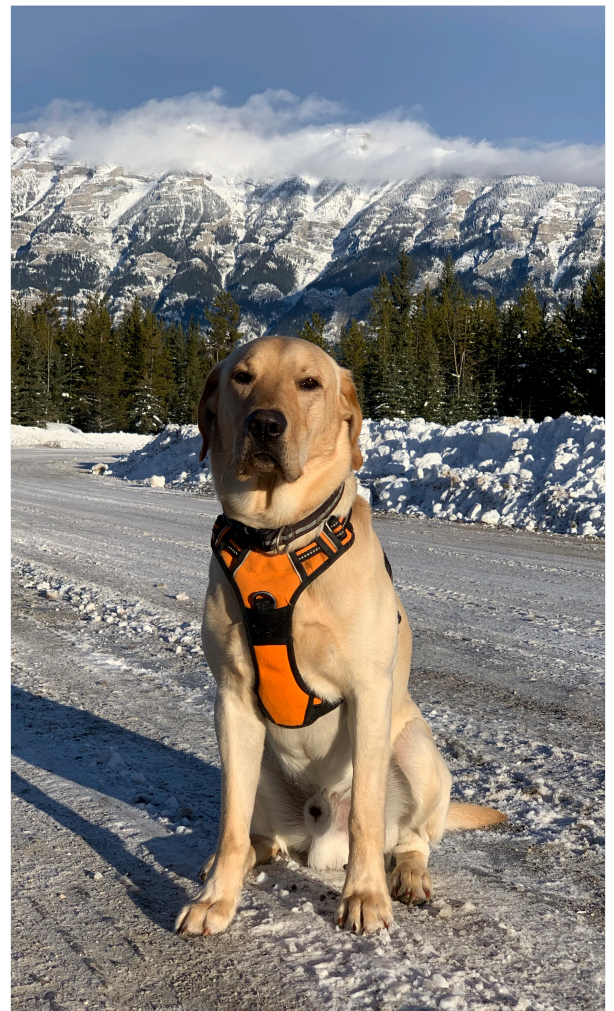
On one of the sunny days this week Thumper and I stopped on our way to Elkford and had a nice long walk (*right*), another of Thumper's favourite things.

And Finally...

We are back into 'ordinary time' for exactly one month; on Wednesday 17th February we will celebrate 'Ash Wednesday' and the beginning of Lent. So feel free to wear green at the weekend as you join us for Mass, and if you are planning to watch our Sunday morning Mass as part of a lazy day around the house, then remember to put your green pyjamas on as you go to bed on Saturday night!

I look forward to seeing you at the weekend.

With many thanks, Fr. David



Link to Weekend Masses After Christmas

To get the link to our 5pm Saturday evening Mass or our 9am Sunday morning Mass please send an e-mail to one of our parish offices with your name and you will then receive the link each week.

info@hollyfamilyfernie.ca

ElkValleyRC@gmail.com

Waiting Room:

Please note when you log on you will be put in a "waiting room".

Hopefully as soon as we see you there we will let in.

If there is a bit of a delay, please just wait, I will be with you as quickly as I can.



Diocese of Plymouth
From the Office of the Bishop

My dear brothers and sisters,

We are grateful to the Government for recognising the central place that places of worship have in the life of our country. They are vital for our spiritual and personal wellbeing, and our worship of God, in turn, is a source of strength and spiritual energy for our continued service of others. We know we must observe the protocols around 'Hands-Face-Space' with an increased vigilance, given the virulence of the latest strain of the virus. In this year of St Joseph, the great protector and defender of Jesus and Mary, in a time of crisis, it is to Him that I entrust us all, and I ask your prayer for me.

Yours devotedly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Mark O'Toole".

Rt Rev Mark O'Toole
Bishop of Plymouth

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

Note on the morality of using some anti-Covid-19 vaccines

The question of the use of vaccines, in general, is often at the centre of controversy in the forum of public opinion. In recent months, this Congregation has received several requests for guidance regarding the use of vaccines against the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19, which, in the course of research and production, employed cell lines drawn from tissue obtained from two abortions that occurred in the last century. At the same time, diverse and sometimes conflicting pronouncements in the mass media by bishops, Catholic associations, and experts have raised questions about the morality of the use of these vaccines.

There is already an important pronouncement of the Pontifical Academy for Life on this issue, entitled "Moral reflections on vaccines prepared from cells derived from aborted human foetuses" (5 June 2005). Further, this Congregation expressed itself on the matter with the Instruction *Dignitas Personae* (September 8, 2008, cf. nn. 34 and 35). In 2017, the Pontifical Academy for Life returned to the topic with a Note. These documents already offer some general directive criteria.

Since the first vaccines against Covid-19 are already available for distribution and administration in various countries, this Congregation desires to offer some indications for clarification of this matter. We do not intend to judge the safety and efficacy of these vaccines, although ethically relevant and necessary, as this evaluation is the responsibility of biomedical researchers and drug agencies. Here, our objective is only to consider the moral aspects of the use of the vaccines against Covid-19 that have been developed from cell lines derived from tissues obtained from two foetuses that were not spontaneously aborted.

1. As the Instruction *Dignitas Personae* states, in cases where cells from aborted foetuses are employed to create cell lines for use in scientific research, "there exist differing degrees of responsibility"^[1] of cooperation in evil. For example, "in organisations where cell lines of illicit origin are being utilised, the responsibility of those who make the decision to use them is not the same as that of those who have no voice in such a decision".^[2]

2. In this sense, when ethically irreproachable Covid-19 vaccines are not available (e.g. in countries where vaccines without ethical problems are not made available to physicians and patients, or where their distribution is more difficult due to special storage and transport conditions, or when various types of vaccines are distributed in the same country but health authorities do not allow citizens to choose the vaccine with which to be inoculated) *it is morally acceptable to receive Covid-19 vaccines that have used cell lines from aborted fetuses in their research and production process.*

3. The fundamental reason for considering the use of these vaccines morally licit is that the kind of cooperation in evil (*passive material cooperation*) in the procured abortion from which these cell lines originate is, on the part of those making use of the resulting vaccines, *remote*. The moral duty to avoid such passive material cooperation is not obligatory if there is a grave danger, such as the otherwise uncontrollable spread of a serious pathological agent[3] — in this case, the pandemic spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19. It must therefore be considered that, in such a case, all vaccinations recognised as clinically safe and effective can be used in good conscience with *the certain knowledge that the use of such vaccines does not constitute formal cooperation with the abortion* from which the cells used in production of the vaccines derive. It should be emphasised, however, that the morally licit use of these types of vaccines, in the particular conditions that make it so, does not in itself constitute a legitimation, even indirect, of the practice of abortion, and necessarily assumes the opposition to this practice by those who make use of these vaccines.

4. In fact, the licit use of such vaccines does not and should not in any way imply that there is a moral endorsement of the use of cell lines proceeding from aborted fetuses.[4] Both pharmaceutical companies and governmental health agencies are therefore encouraged *to produce, approve, distribute and offer ethically acceptable vaccines that do not create problems of conscience* for either health care providers or the people to be vaccinated.

5. At the same time, practical reason makes evident that vaccination is not, as a rule, a moral obligation and that, therefore, it must be voluntary. In any case, from the ethical point of view, *the morality of vaccination depends not only on the duty to protect one's own health, but also on the duty to pursue the common good.* In the absence of

other means to stop or even prevent the epidemic, the common good may recommend vaccination, especially to protect the weakest and most exposed. Those who, however, for reasons of conscience, refuse vaccines produced with cell lines from aborted foetuses, must do their utmost to avoid, by other prophylactic means and appropriate behaviour, becoming vehicles for the transmission of the infectious agent. In particular, they must avoid any risk to the health of those who cannot be vaccinated for medical or other reasons, and who are the most vulnerable.

6. Finally, there is also a moral imperative for the pharmaceutical industry, governments and international organisations to ensure that vaccines, which are effective and safe from a medical point of view, as well as ethically acceptable, are also accessible to the poorest countries in a manner that is not costly for them. The lack of access to vaccines, otherwise, would become another sign of discrimination and injustice that condemns poor countries to continue living in health, economic and social poverty.^[5]

The Sovereign Pontiff Francis, at the Audience granted to the undersigned Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on 17th December 2020, examined the present Note and ordered its publication.

Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,
on 21st December 2020, Liturgical Memorial of Saint Peter Canisius.

Luis F. Card. Ladaria, S.I.
Prefect

+ S.E. Mons. Giacomo Morandi
Titular Archbishop of Cerveteri
Secretary

[1] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Dignitas Personae* (8th December 2008), n. 35; AAS (100), 884.

[2] *Ibid*, 885.

[3] Cfr. Pontifical Academy for Life, "[Moral reflections on vaccines prepared from cells derived from aborted human foetuses](#)", 5th June 2005.

[4] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruct. *Dignitas Personae*, n. 35: "When the illicit action is endorsed by the laws which regulate healthcare and scientific research, it is necessary to distance oneself from the evil aspects of that system in order not to give the impression of a certain toleration or tacit acceptance of actions which are gravely unjust. Any appearance of acceptance would in fact contribute to the growing indifference to, if not the approval of, such actions in certain medical and political circles".

[5] Cfr. Francis, [Address to the members of the "Banco Farmaceutico" foundation](#), 19th September 2020.