

IMPORTANT NOTES ON PASTORAL CARE

Fr. Ferguson, along with Fr. Jeffrey Tigyer and Dcn. Mike Hood, stands ready to serve your pastoral needs. Periodically, I like to remind parishioners of how best to access pastoral care here in our Hardin County parishes, for your convenience and spiritual benefit. The following is some important information:

- 1) **HOSPITAL STAYS:** Please note that, due to current laws, hospitals are no longer able to notify local clergy about enlisted Catholic patients. We won't know someone is in the hospital unless you tell us. If you wish one of the parish clergy to visit you or a loved one during a hospital stay, PLEASE LET US KNOW by calling the Parish Emergency Line (419-673-6720), or (in Kenton) you may also call the regular Kenton church number (419-675-1162) and press the emergency option for Fr. Jeffrey. [Columbus-area hospitals also have local priests "on call"; you may ask the nursing staff to contact the "Catholic Chaplain on call"; or you may still always call our Parish Emergency options.]
- 2) **TERMINAL ILLNESSES:** It is important for a gravely sick person to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and also Viaticum (Holy Communion for the last time) [these used to be called "Last Rites" in the old days] prior to death. HOWEVER, we need NOT wait until the "last moment" to call a priest to administer these sacraments. It is okay – and much preferable – to call a priest several days – even weeks – prior to an anticipated time of death to request these sacraments. While some medical emergencies obviously arise suddenly, most terminal patients are ill for some time, and it is much better to be able to minister to a person with less frenzy and haste by not waiting until the "last moment". This will also allow the person to receive Viaticum while still conscious. Plus, in these days of clergy shortages, we may risk not being able to reach a priest in time if we wait until the "last moment". Please arrange for these sacraments, earlier rather than later, by calling the Parish Emergency options as above.
- 3) **FUNERALS:** While you may certainly contact Fr. Ferguson upon a time of death of a loved one, normally a family meets with a Funeral Director, who will then call Fr. Ferguson to finalize arrangements, depending on parish scheduling logistics. Fr. Ferguson will also be the one to "delegate" funeral arrangements to Fr. Jeffrey or Dcn. Mike if circumstances warrant. Parish staff will then make final liturgical arrangements with the family.
- 4) **BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS, ANNULMENTS:** Please contact Fr. Ferguson directly to initiate arrangements for all these cases. He may be reached through his normal contact information. If circumstances warrant, he may then "delegate" a case to Fr. Jeffrey or Dcn. Mike.
- 5) **HOMEBOUND VISITS/NURSING HOMES:** If you or a loved one is unable to come to weekend Mass, we offer a "homebound visitation" program staffed by parish volunteers. You may also ask any of the three clergy to visit as well. Please arrange a one-time or long-term home visitation by calling either parish office, or by contacting any of the parish clergy.
- 6) **GENERAL SPIRITUAL DIRECTION:** Any of the three clergy is available for spiritual direction. Although this is very different from *psychological* counseling – which we are not licensed to do – *spiritual direction* is an important service to help individuals with their spiritual struggles or overall growth by making use of Scripture, prayer, the saints, the Church's wisdom, etc. If interested, contact any of the three parish clergy directly.

Hopefully, these points of information will assist everyone in knowing how best to access the pastoral care services offered by our Hardin County parishes. If you have any questions, feel free to ask Fr. Ferguson at any time. Thank you! St. Mary, our Mother, Pray for Us!