



PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM RECTOR

17 March 2020

Beloved brothers and sisters,

Pax Christi! (Peace of Christ)

We have entered into the first week of suspension of all religious and social activities in the parish. I sincerely desire everyone **has been making** good use of this unusual opportunity and time of grace.

Lenten Reflection during "Restricted Movements Order"

The whole nation will be on "Restricted Movements Order" (not quite a "lockdown" ... yet) by tomorrow until 31 March 2020. Look at this **restriction** positively. When we are by law stopped from doing a hundred things, like Martha, we will learn more easily that there are very few things that are really needed and only one thing that is necessary.

This is an amazing Lenten gift...

- to improve on the essential in quiet and prayer;
- to learn that we don't live on bread alone, to not test God (like opposing the suspension and jump down from the parapet of the temple) or worship wealth, power, and pleasures (1st Sunday Lent, Mt 4:1-11);

- to follow the Lord to climb assiduously and ascend the Mountain of our Transfiguration (2nd Sunday Lent, Mt 17:1-9);
- to drink Christ deeply who is our living water that is offered freely to everyone by a thirsty Jesus without judging anyone even those worse than the Samaritan woman (3rd Sunday Lent, Jn 4:5-42).
- to admit and submit humbly that we are born blind and need divine power to be enlightened, to see (4th Sunday Lent, Jn 9:1-41);
- to need to be allowed to die like Lazarus precisely to show the glory of God when he raises us up from the dead, (5th Sunday Lent Jn 11:1-45).

Given the real threat of COVID-19 and our positive response to prevent its spread, there is a better chance we can “hear” and “see” these Lenten catecheses (above) much better, better than a hundred homilies and Sunday School classes in routine times when our ears and heart are engaged on just getting through the motion and be finished with it, on automatic drive.

Danger of Abusing this Special Time of Grace

I hope every family and individual has already been watching televised Masses and other spiritual and liturgical activities. Thank God for the internet!

However, be careful not to get even more addicted to the smart phone and other gadgets now that there is little else to do!!! That would be double jeopardy! Guidelines on how to benefit more fruitfully on televised Masses etc and Spiritual Communion have been given and is available all over the internet.

Importance of Contrition/Repentance

One important weapon in our arsenal for a spiritual reboot is: Perfect Contrition, a grace from God. Let us ask sincerely for this gift throughout the day prior to making our Act of Contrition: "My God, grant me perfect contrition for all my sins."

You may follow this:

1. In reality or imagination kneel at the foot of a crucifix and say to yourself:
"Jesus, my God and my Savior, in the midst of your agony, you remembered me,
you suffered for me, you wished to wipe away my sins."

2. Contrition is "perfect" if you repent of your sins because you love God and are sorry for offending Him and causing the sufferings of Christ on the Cross. Before the Crucified Christ remember your sins, repent of them because they have brought Our Lord to His sufferings on the Cross. Promise him, that with His help, you will not sin again.

3. Recite, slowly and sincerely, an act of contrition focused on the goodness of God and your love of Jesus: "O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace I will not sin again. Amen."
(What a good time to learn this by heart finally!)

4. Make a firm resolution to go to sacramental confession as soon as practically possible.

St. Maximilian Kolbe who gave his own life in place of another fellow-prisoner, wrote the following at the outbreak of the Second World War: "Whoever can, should receive the sacrament of penance (confession). Whoever cannot, because of prohibiting circumstances, should cleanse his soul by acts of perfect contrition — that is, the sorrow of a loving child who does not consider so much the pain or reward as he does the pardon from his father and mother to whom he has brought displeasure."

God is good, all the time

My dear father who went back to God two years ago was taught a little dictum/saying when he got weaker and weaker in the last few months of his life: “God is good, all the time!” and it became his mantra to his dying days. How true! A great mantra, a great legacy passed on to my family who heard him say it many times deliberately and clearly even as he knew he was dying... and for everyone in good and bad times. When we say and mean it in these COVID-19 days, we actually make a true Act of Faith, and an Act of Hope, both of which will help drive us to acts of charity. Our Good God is always God-With-Us, all the time!

May the Lord deliver us from all evil!

May we grow into a more united and caring community of faith because we don't meet!

Fr Cosmas Lee

Rector