

4th Sunday Of Lent

The Lenten Liturgy continues to hammer away at the theme of forgiveness. It is so critical in our day and age to embrace the gift of forgiveness. I am one who finds it difficult to forgive and let go. I am sure I am not alone. But there is an option that all of us have – our Relationship with our faith in Jesus.

We live in a time of great flux – pressure coming from all angles – forcing us to make choices. Sometimes it is extremely difficult to make the right choice. And sometimes we just refuse to make that choice. What happens then can change things forever. This is not just person to person. It can be family to family - nation to nation.

Young people have a difficult time today understanding the real purpose of forgiveness, and more importantly, the church's purpose of the Sacrament of Forgiveness. They say it is too mechanical and meaningless. But the reality is that this Sacrament does not belong to the church but to

the Lord. He embraced it personally and offered the example of the Coronavirus Pandemic to us to be free.

Two weeks ago we officially were introduced to the Coronavirus Pandemic – a out of control virus that is taking over the lives of many communities across the world and state of NJ. It has caused confusion and fear. Nerves and feelings have been tested. Families put in the position of not being able to visit elderly relatives or friends / keeping 6 feet apart of other persons. This outbreak has changed everything we are accustomed to doing each day. All of this has put more pressure on us and more a need to figure it all out. How do we continue?

Our faith is a gift that has been given us – a gift that we have shared for all of our lives. Our faith does not come to an end – even in the most difficult of times. In fact, our faith can become stronger during challenging times – like now. Think about those times in your life when you felt distant from the Lord – impatient with the Lord – angered with the Lord. Even in those times He never left us – but

encouraged us to see a light at the end of the tunnel. He saw that light at the end of the tunnel while on the Cross and then embraced his new life with the Father.

As I write this message I realized that by the end of today Spring will begin – a new sense of freedom from the winter months. I pray also we will be free of this virus as soon as possible. But my real hope is that we, as a community and friends, will stay positive – pray for the sick and poor – embrace our family even more (not physically). I pray also that we keep patient with one another – find new ways to stay in touch with loved ones and friends (even me).

Jesus helped another to see a light at the end of the tunnel – the Blind man who, through faith, received his sight. People were overwhelmed by what they saw. Many did not believe – but most did believe that the Son of Man has the power to create light and freedom. I hope you do as well.

Stay calm my friends. Keep in touch with me and each other. Stay positive and learn to be patient. We will get through this together.

Next weekend I will be offering Mass on my website. Please join us and know that the grace and love of Jesus, will come to us through mass. I recommend that the whole family celebrate mass with me online. I will try and do this each week while we deal with this horrible crisis.

Fr. Michael Drury
Pastor Emeritus