

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent Year A

In today's First and Gospel Readings we have such fitting readings for the current situation of the coronavirus. In both readings, we have people desperate. In the First Reading, we have a panic-stricken group of people who are in danger of death. Death by thirst. This is real and they are scared and angry. In the Gospel, we have the poor woman who is also driven by her thirst to many disordered relationships and her physical thirst now is forcing her to go out in the midday, hot sun in search of water.

Today we have a panic-stricken people thirsting for some security, some safety from the virus. As of now, there is a less than 1 in 100,000 chance of being one of the proven infected ones and even a far less chance of dying from it. Yet it is right to take precautions for sure. But I think that we need to really work on our faith during this time. We are not to be driven by fear as Christians but compelled by love. The world, like the woman, has for too long drank of the stagnant well water of the world and thought that is all there was for them. Yet in the Gospel, Jesus offers the living water. We, too, are offered the living water of faith as to not be driven by fear.

We should examine ourselves carefully in this time. The government recommends cleaning and sterilizing of things that are touched and I don't disagree. I think we should see what we are doing for our health and see if we are doing the same for our souls. If you thought coronavirus was in your house, what steps would you be taking to clean it? Then ask, what steps have we taken to clean our souls this Lent? I wonder if our fear of disease and death is not affected strongly by the state of our souls. How could Christians constantly risk their lives out of love? They could only do it with a pure soul.

This world needs our faith right now, it needs a strong drink from the living water of our faith. How do we get faith in these times? Well, we pray for it on a daily basis. How do we love in these times? We pray for it. How do we hope in these times? We pray for it. The world, more than ever, will need people of strong faith, hope and love. We need to be a people who are not perpetuating the fear that is going around.

I am open to suggestions of how to help the world with faith during these tough times. One idea I had is, when I get back on Thursday, to do daily processions in the evening after Mass and pray the rosary for the end of this scourge, finishing on the Solemnity of the Annunciation. There is historical evidence that plagues ended through prayers to our Mother on one her feast days. In these times when people contemplate their end it is important to give them something to see. It is often that people return to the faith in these tough times. But during this Lent, we need to become a people who trusts in God and knows God like we have never done before, so that they will find an authentic Christian community who loves God with their whole heart and trusts Him to save us.

I was meditating on this problem this week that as Catholics we don't seem to be very good at perpetuating our faith. When I talk to people who are faithful and have a relationship with God, it seems that they do certain, helpful things, though they may not have taught them to their children.

These things include praying a morning offering of your life and work to God.

They are wise to add acts of Faith, Hope and Charity each day.

They have some daily devotion of the Rosary or Angelus or Divine Mercy Chaplet, or all of them.

And usually they examine themselves in the evening about the good and the bad aspects of their day and ask for help to be better.

I have taken the time to put together a little prayer card. I would like us all to be extra faithful during this time to truly be the light in these dark times.