April 26, 2020

Dear Parishioners and friends,

You will notice something different from the past few weeks of our live streaming of masses. There is no music this weekend. Let me assure you that Fr. Jack, Frank Conlon, Deb, the staff and I are well. One of our contract employees has tested positive for Covid-19 virus and out of an abundance of caution we decided to limit the number of people whom we would interact. This person is doing well at this time. We closed our parish offices. In addition, since there is a long incubation period without symptoms, we made the decision to sanitize the offices, school and church. This being said let us move onto the reflections for the Third Sunday of Easter.

Our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles has Peter mincing no words. He charges the Israelites and lawless men with the killing of Jesus and God raising Him from the dead. All this is done with the foreknowledge of God and by a set plan. All this is done for our good.

Often, we struggle with the concept if God knew this was going to happen why did he allow it to occur. One of the foundations of our understanding of creation is that God created out of love. True love must always be free and never coerced. Free will is essential for true love and therefore God will not take away our free will even as He knows what choices we will make. God works with our choices, drawing us to the good by showing us the truth in what we do. For through the death and resurrection of Jesus salvation is offered to those who repent and are baptized. We see from the earliest beginning of the Church, evangelization is crucial. The Eleven and the other Disciples witnessed not only with their words but with their actions as well as their lives even to the point of death.

We see this did not happen all at once but developed over the course of time. The magnificent Gospel account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus is not only true in itself but a description of how we come to believe.

Note, Cleopas and the other disciple are discouraged and despondent as they walk away from Jerusalem. They have witnessed the death of Jesus and heard the report that the tomb was now empty and Jesus was alive. These disciples do not believe the women’s report, for they say, “We were hoping that He would be the one to redeem Israel.” You can see that their lack of faith in the words of the women, the words of Jesus himself, inhibited their understanding. Jesus then takes the time to share with them the Sacred Scriptures. Their hearts become on fire and burn within them and they long for this stranger to remain with them. After blessing the bread and sharing it with them they come to recognize Jesus. This then impels them to return at once to Jerusalem and announce the Good News, Jesus is alive!

We see that Faith comes through understanding; it is a gift. The word of God must be read, prayed over, and explored. We must travel with companions on this road of life. We come to know the truth of who Jesus is and we receive Him in the breaking of the bread, the Eucharist. Give thanks to God for the people in your lives who have shared the truth of God’s love for you. Shared with you their life’s journey and supported you and upheld you in trying times.

As so many of us are unable to receive the Eucharist, which we truly miss, we have an insatiable hunger. Even though we cannot receive we have the opportunity to proclaim the Risen Lord. This is a time of great sacrifice for so many of us but we know it is not an ending. We have heard the expression, “Absence make the heart grow fonder.” We are not discouraged or despondent. We live with hope and joy. Lift up your hearts in prayer that we soon will be able to gather with one another and be in communion with the Lord. We are a people who know the truth and we freely choose to live in the light of the Resurrection. This is the time to share one’s faith. This is the time the Lord gives to us with all its trials. He knew it would occur and He travels with us on the road to eternal life. He is our life.