

Pastor's Message

4th SUNDAY OF LENT 2020



Coronavirus: A Cure in the Desert

Lent is a walk through the desert. We were reminded of that from the get-go as the gospel of the First Sunday of Lent always presents an account of Jesus' forty day desert hiatus. The Exodus experience of the people of Israel and their forty-year trek through the desert before entering the Promised Land is also a traditional item of Lenten reflection. It therefore seems strangely apt that we are finding our way through a desert of our own this Lent as we embrace the Coronavirus crisis. We know it's not a forty day journey and hope and pray it isn't a forty year odyssey! Thankfully, likely not. We are somewhere in between. In more ways than one.

At last Sunday's Masses I mentioned in my homily that what we are summoned to do during this crisis is interestingly much of what the Lord constantly calls us to do – to simplify our lives. In this push-button and voice-command age our lives have become wildly hyperactive, noisy and complicated as we increasingly seek instant gratification and immediate control of just about everything. This mad rush, which often leaves us with little time to meaningfully relate to and cherish one another, compromises marriages, family life and appropriate development of children and young people. Moreover, popular culture has been progressively distancing us from traditional Judeo-Christian values and mores which define life and guide its integration. So is it any wonder that the wheels have come off the bus? Obviously, we find ourselves in crisis because something, if not many things, have gone wrong. Regardless of what we think has caused this mess, the mishandling of life lies at the bottom of it. Distressing, inconvenient and alarming as its circumstances are, Coronavirus has nonetheless come to provide a reality check and timely wake-up call.

As such, this pandemic is obliging us to retreat, reflect and repent. If we take advantage of the lessons it comes to teach and the grace that lies therein, it can serve as a much needed purification of sorts. It is up to us whether we choose to draw new life from it or persist in our distorted ways. The choice is ours. We can continue to live in error or rediscover life as it is meant to be lived. We are somewhere in between indeed.

May the simplicity of life, increased family time, and heightened concern for the elderly and vulnerable we experience, heal and empower us. May our enhanced sense of

vulnerability and powerlessness lead us to greater reliance on divine providence. May the painful realization that life cannot be lived with the breakneck speed and noise we have become accustomed to free us to live as God prescribes. We have been infected for a long time. Amidst our Lenten desert walk, Coronavirus comes to offer us a cure.