

3/20/20

Dear Parishioners,

In the Gospel reading for this weekend (John 9: 1-41) we have the account of Jesus healing the man born blind. In years past I have reflected on how we ourselves are often blind to the presence of God in our lives and how Jesus can restore our spiritual sight just as He restored the physical sight of the blind man. In my prayer this week I came to realize how blind I have been. Perhaps what I have learned about myself may help some of you in your own spiritual life.

I have been blind to the abundance of food that we have available to us. As many of you may have figured out, I do enjoy eating. Food shortages in stores, the uncertainty of the next few weeks, and a limited amount of food in the pantry have helped me to realize how generous God is to us in the abundance that is ours. While I have no fear of starving (like a camel I have a reserve store of calories - except mine is in front instead of on my back) I have come to appreciate more what Jesus taught us to pray - "Give us this day our daily bread". God has always provided for us; God will always provide for us. I may have been blind to that, but now I can see.

I have been blind to how God blesses me through those around me. I firmly believe that God uses those around us to bring blessings into our lives. However, I realize how often I have forgotten that. Sometimes I let the shortcomings/eccentricities/habits of those around me overshadow the blessing that they are. Being separated from everyone - family, friends, brother priests, employees, parishioners - has helped me to see that each one, though imperfect (as I am), can be an instrument of God in my life. I may have been blind to that, but now I can see.

I have been blind to the Grace that is to be found in the Church. That may be a strange thing for a priest to say, but, unfortunately, it's true. I'm not saying that I don't know what the Church teaches about the sacraments (I do) or that I don't believe what She teaches (I do). It's just that I realized this week that I had come to take for granted

the great privilege of being able to celebrate the Eucharist. Most weekends I am pulled in multiple directions and running back and forth between the two parishes. While I try to prepare myself for each celebration of Eucharist, I realize now that many times I was just doing what needed to be done. Instead of allowing the Eucharist to strengthen me, I was fulfilling an obligation, a responsibility. There is a prayer that says: "Priest of Jesus Christ, celebrate this Holy Mass as if it were your first Mass, your last Mass, your only Mass." That should be true for each of us. The Eucharist is the great source of strength for us, the source and summit of our Faith. It is a great privilege to participate. I may have been blind to that, but now I can see.

I am sure that there are many other areas of my life in which I have been blind to the presence and work of God. I pray that God will remove that blindness and allow me to truly see. I invite you to join me in praying for the gift of spiritual sight to be restored to each of us. During this time of crisis we place our trust in Jesus; our hope is in following Him on the path that He has set for us.

Remember, we can't follow if we can't see.

I continue to pray for all of you; please pray for me.

In Christ, Fr. Caruso