

NOTRE DAME PARISH

Sixth Sunday of Easter

"I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you."



Faith is more than asserting belief in dogmas. It's more than trust. It's seeing God in the wonders of everyday life. It's witnessing to divine activity where others see none.

In John's Gospel, Jesus commanded his followers to love. To accomplish that feat, he promised a Guide, the

Holy Spirit. He also promised to return soon. With help and a goal, we can take heart that we can love, and know that God loves us. For, in Jesus, we see God's love.

How are you being loving at this time of social distancing? How are you reaching out? +

FAITH & ONLINE MASS

During the week of April 20-26, the Pew Research Center conducted a survey in which Americans were asked about their faith in light of their closed churches.

The first bit of good news is how many people said their houses of worship were able to go online. Of those affiliated with a religious tradition, 81.2% indicated that their church had shifted to broadcasting services over the internet.

Even better from the clergy's point of view is that their members who have gone online report a larger growth in faith than those whose services have not moved to online streaming. Of those who had moved online, 42.4% said that their faith had grown stronger. For those without an online service to watch, the share of those who said that their faith had grown was a more modest 30.9%.

Reported by Religion News Service

Oremus – Let Us Pray

- For those who have lost their jobs due to Covid-19
- For those who supply and serve at food banks
- For households in want of nourishing food
- For orphans in underdeveloped countries
- For those suffering psychological distress
- For an end to racism in our communities
- For officials and leaders charged with making life and death decisions
- For wisdom and prudence in re-opening public places
- For the sick and chronically ill
- For the poor, people of color, and all those who work in essential services

How and When Can We Be Ready?

I prefer to err on the side of caution, even though the State and Diocese are loosening up.

Here are the challenges to returning to public worship at Notre Dame.

- A significant number of active parishioners are over 65 (pastor included)
- Regulating attendance, not only of parishioners, but also summer visitors who are generally walk-ins.
- Who will do the required sanitizing and wipe-downs of pews, bathrooms, and doors after each service?
- Will all who attend comply with wearing a mask?

- Who wants to be in the position of turning people away?

These are some of the things that must be worked out in the coming weeks.

We have tentatively scheduled Graduation for Thursday, June 25 @ 6 o'clock p.m. We have tentatively scheduled First Communion for Saturday, June 27 @ 10 o'clock a.m.

If you have any practical ideas let me know. In the meantime I will be looking for best practices in other churches. Keep faith.

Father Keith & Rocco



*The scars of others
should teach us caution.*

St. Jerome

What World Is Possible After the Pandemic?



*Disaster is sometimes a door back into
paradise.*

WE DON'T KNOW the full extent of the coronavirus pandemic. We know of the many who have died as a direct result of infection. We know that whole countries have turned on a dime to shield themselves from the shadow of death as it passes over. We don't know where it will lead.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Rebecca Solnit wrote, "Horrible in itself, disaster is sometimes a door back into paradise, that paradise at least in which we are who we hope to be, do the work we desire, and are each our sister's and brother's keeper." Solnit reminds us that disasters and plagues sometimes signal liberation.

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Pope Francis at Mass: Pray for healing from all pandemics

At the start of Mass in the Casa Santa Marta on 14 May, Pope Francis encouraged people of all faiths to pray, fast, and perform works of charity for an end to the coronavirus pandemic.

“Today, the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity has called for a day of prayer and fasting to ask the merciful God for an end to this tragic moment of the pandemic. We are all brothers and sisters. St Francis of Assisi used to say: “All brothers and sisters”. And so, men and women of every religious confession are uniting themselves today in prayer and penance to ask for the grace of healing from this pandemic.”

In his homily, Pope Francis reflected on the example of the prophet Jonah.

“The city of Nineveh was afflicted by some sort of pandemic – perhaps by a moral pandemic – and was about to be destroyed. God called Jonah to preach a message of prayer, penance, and fasting.”

He said Jonah was initially overcome by fear and so

ran away from his mission. God called him again, and the prophet went to Nineveh to preach.

People of all faiths and traditions are called to pray and fast together for delivery from the pandemic, as the people of Nineveh did in response to Jonah’s preaching.

None of us expected the coronavirus pandemic, he said. Now it is upon us, and “many people are dying, many of them alone.”

The Pope warned those who have not been touched by the pandemic not to rejoice.

“Often the thought can arise: ‘Well, at least I haven’t been affected. Thank God I’m safe.’ But think about others. Think about the tragedy and its consequences on the economy and education. Think about what will come afterwards.”

He said we unite in prayer today to overcome this selfish attitude.

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Pope Francis said praying together is in no way “religious relativism”.

“How can we not pray to the Father of all? Everyone prays as they know how, as they can, according to what they have received from their culture. We aren’t praying against each other... We are united in humanity as brothers and sisters.”

He urged everyone to ask God for forgiveness of our sins, so that “God might put an end to this pandemic.”

The Pope went on to recall the many other pandemics that afflict humanity.

Citing official statistics, he noted that over 3.7 million people died from hunger in the first four months of the year.

“This day of prayer against the pandemic must make us think also of many other pandemics. The pandemics of war, of hunger.”

Returning to the Book of Jonah, Pope Francis said the people of Nineveh listened to the prophet and converted from their evil ways. God saw their conversion and stopped the pandemic.

“May God put an end to this tragedy – this pandemic – and have mercy on us. And may He put an end to the other terrible pandemics of hunger, war, and uneducated children. This we ask as brothers and sisters, all together. May God bless us all, and have mercy on us.” +



LOVELY LADY DRESSED IN BLUE

Lovely Lady dressed in blue--
Teach me how to pray!
God was just your little boy,
Tell me what to say!

Did you lift Him up, sometimes,
Gently on your knee?
Did you sing to Him the way
Mother does to me?

Did you hold His hand at night?
Did you ever try
Telling stories of the world?
O! And did He cry?

Do you really think He cares
If I tell Him things--
Little things that happen? And
Do the Angels' wings

Make a noise? And can He hear
Me if I speak low?
Does He understand me now?
Tell me--for you know.

Lovely Lady dressed in blue --
Teach me how to pray!
God was just your little boy,
And you know the way.

Mary Dixon Thayer authored this poem. It was popularized in the 1950s by Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

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COVID-19 has forced the human community into mourning. In our retreat from the work-a-day world, it has imposed a global sabbath and Jubilee. Staring into this “cruel scourge,” as John of Ephesus described the Justinian plague in the year 545 C.E., can we also see that another world is possible?

The Jubilee legislation found in Leviticus 25 lays out a vision for “social and economic reform unsurpassed in the ancient Near East,” according to Robert K. Gnuse. The Jubilee laws declared that Yahweh was the rightful owner of all the earth, and therefore all Israelites – rich and poor – have an equal right to its abundance, within limits. In an economic system based on land and its produce, this was a radical transformation. The legislation undercut wealth disparities by preventing land speculation and by mandating debt forgiveness and interest-free loans. Finally, it ordered the release of the enslaved and those in debtors’ prison.

God created the world with abundance, but also with perimeter alerts. Pandemics are just one alarm bell the earth is sounding. Rising sea levels, melting polar ice, and disrupted seasons are all part of the earth’s complex warning system alerting us that humans are living beyond our limits.

In March, traffic levels in New York City were down 35 percent and carbon monoxide dropped by 50 percent. Notably, scientists say that we may see carbon dioxide emissions as low as during the last financial crisis in 2008. When extractive global economic activity is reduced, greenhouse gases plummet.

Wealth disparities are not a given, they are a choice. Proponents of an unfettered free market have become socialists overnight – demanding direct payments to most U.S. taxpayers, increases and expansion of unemployment benefits, industry bailouts at levels that essentially nationalize whole sectors, the underwriting of struggling hospitals and health care systems, and the launching of a newly trained American workforce into production

of COVID-19 protective equipment and testing supplies. We can choose to distribute wealth more equitably.

In a crisis, CEOs (or magazine editors) are not “essential workers.” Instead, we rely on grocery clerks, physician’s assistants, truck drivers, plumbers, first responders, farm workers, IT administrators, and short-order cooks. Is it time to pay essential workers a salary and benefits package that matches Boeing’s CEO? Essential workers should be feeling their political power and leveraging it.

This spring, we saw local governments across the U.S. release thousands of inmates to prevent virus outbreaks. Prosecutors demanded the release of nonviolent offenders, the elderly and sick, those within six months of completing their sentences, and those who cannot afford cash bail. What about forgiving their prison debt too? An important component of Jubilee is the release of slaves and prisoners, forgiveness of debts, and the manifestation of the mercies of God.

“If paradise now arises in hell,” wrote Solnit, “it’s because in the suspension of the usual order and the failure of most systems, we are free to live and act another way.” This liberation, forged in exhaustion and personal grief, must build power for the world that God intends – one where earth is sacred, mutual aid brings pleasure, labor is fairly compensated, economic inequity is diminished, priority is given to family and kinship, and praise of God is commonplace. It is ours to choose. †

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CHILDREN'S COLORING PAGE

