**“What is Pleasing to God”**

All our readings today point us to what is pleasing to God. God created us so we can know Him, love Him, worship Him, and serve Him by obeying His commandments. These four things, are what are pleasing to God. It is when we do the will of God and not our own will, that we will be pleasing to God. When we do God’s will, we will die to self. Dying to self, is pleasing to God who looks into our hearts and does not only see what we are like on the outside.

In our first reading, we are introduced to what is pleasing to God when, in choosing a leader for His chosen people, God chose David, the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse. God asked Samuel to anoint David as king because God was displeased with Saul the first king. Why, because Saul did not do what was pleasing to God. He did not obey God’s commandment after winning a war with his enemies.

In choosing David, God said, it is not the outside appearance of a person that counts, but what goes on inside of a person that counts. What is pleasing to God is what is in our heart. On the outside, while I might be doing good deeds, our inside might be **“full of dead men’s bones and every kind of filth”** (Matt 23:27b). What is pleasing to God is how we have accepted and put into action what is in His Gospel. God is pleased with us when we act on His words.

In our second reading, Paul in his letter to the Ephesians also pointed to what is pleasing to God. He told the Ephesians that they were no longer in darkness, since they had received the light of Christ through their baptism into Christ. So they should avoid things that are not pleasing to God such as sins of the flesh which veils the light of Christ and leave us in darkness.

He told them, since they had the light of Christ, they should know God, they should love Him with all their heart, strength and mind, and they should worship Him with utmost reverence and serve Him in serving others. Paul enjoined them to wake up the Holy Spirit that they received from God. The Holy Spirit that had remained dormant in them because of their sins. It is then, the veil would be removed, and they would see with the light of Christ.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus met a man who was both physically and spiritually blind. (If you remember last Sunday, the woman at the well was only spiritually blind.) Like the story of the woman at the well, in today’s account of healing of the blind man, Jesus was the one who first approached both of them before healing them.

Outside of His apostles, only in both stories, did Jesus revealed Himself directly, as the Messiah. After their encounter with Jesus, they both evangelized to others about Jesus. The women at the well, evangelized to the people of her town. While the man born blind, evangelized to the Pharisees. The people of the town accepted Jesus as the Messiah while the Pharisees, blinded by their interpretation of God’s third commandment regarding the Sabbath day, rejected Him.

In our world today, we are experiencing in our generation a horror we have never quite experienced before. It is not like the invasion of the body snatchers, a 1956 American science fiction horror film produced by Walter Wanger. But it is the invasion of the coronavirus virus that when contracted by a person, most of the time, kill’s the host in some few days. Somehow, it is spreading like wildfire all over the world and doctors, scientists and authorities are working feverishly to stop the spread and find a cure.

I was reflecting on this virus and how it has affected our Church! First I thought about people who had never taken the Eucharist in a serious way as they should. To them, St Paul would say, **“Awake, O Sleeper...Christ will give you light.”** There is another group that might say, forget it, I am done with going to Mass. And yet there is another segment who might be distraught because they could not receive the Eucharist.

Yes, if it is great homilies one is looking for, we can find many on the internet to read or listen to! If it is great music and singing we are looking for, there are many places we can go to, to buy great music or even download them from the internet and sing our hearts out! However, there is one thing we cannot get anywhere else, and that is the Eucharist; the source and summit of our worship of God. It is the gift given to us that we offer back to God that is most pleasing to Him.

I also thought about little children who might not completely comprehend why churches are being shut down. They might think, why could I not receive the Eucharist? Well, would they turn out as adults who do not care if they go to Mass or receive the Eucharist?

After thinking about all these, I had to go to confession because I knew deep in my heart, God has all the right answers that gives Him glory.

My confessor reminded me of a story of a Country that was invaded in 1939. In that Country, people could not attend Mass anymore, nor could anyone attend any seminary to become a priest. However, God raised up a young man who persevered against all odds. This man later became a priest, a bishop. Yes, my brethren, that man was Karol Wojtyla who later became a pope and the ‘great’ Saint Pope John Paul II. That Country, was Poland.

He said God in His wisdom is probably molding many saints like Saint Pope John Paul II during the same period we are in. A period when almost all Catholics in this Country and some other parts of the world are not able to attend Mass. That short reminder, consoled me immensely. I thought I would share the story with you; hoping that it would console some of us, especially those who might be watching the Mass in their homes.

As we come with the utmost reverence to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask Him to open our spiritual eyes, so we can always know Him, adore Him, and see Him in the Eucharist.