

From the desk of.....

Fr Laible

Palm Sunday 2020

“We have been doing a lot of turning this Lent: *turning away from sin, turning back to God, turning upward, turning God-ward, turning inward, turning downward.* And the past few weeks, turning away from COVID-19 with social distancing. You might be thinking that there is no other place to turn. But there is. Today we turn cross-ward, that is, toward the cross. For this is where all our Lenten turning with Jesus Christ has been taking us.

Not turning back, but turning forward, turning toward the cross: *that is where we are headed this day and this Holy Week, because this is where his life of turning to God took Jesus.* Wherever Jesus turned in life, to whatever sick and suffering and needy people Jesus turned, he knew that the Lord God was the only help for them and for him. Jesus came to know this completely in his passion and death on the cross, when he died as the Suffering Servant whom the prophet Isaiah had foretold.

We need to know this too: the Lord God is our help on our personal way of the cross with Jesus. *“Your attitude must be Christ,”* says St Paul. What attitude?

The attitude of complete trust in God’s plan for us, even when we are emptied out in suffering or pain, in frustration or disappointment, and especially now as we deal with these difficult days of a pandemic. Ours must be the attitude of humbly turning toward the cross of Jesus and finding the strength and grace of Almighty God to hold on to our faith and the hope that Jesus gives us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Turning toward the cross – toward the cross of Jesus and our own cross – is the only way we can know the surpassing power of God, our only hope”.

As we enter into Holy Week, a week that we traditionally gather in our parish churches to experience the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we do so this year in a way that is both unexpected and difficult. To be separated from our Spiritual family, our Parish community, and more so, to not be able to receive the Sacraments as we have throughout our lives, makes this Holy Week a time of unique spiritual suffering.

Yet, just as Jesus gave himself fully to God on the Cross, we give ourselves fully to what is required of our country and world, thru social distancing, knowing that our efforts will help break the chain of this contagion. The isolation that we are experiencing, by following the importance of social distancing, can be united with the suffering that our Lord experienced as he walked the painful road to Calvary. He also had to “leave behind” all that he deeply cared about, including his Beloved Mother, Mary, along with his closest followers. In doing this,

however, he was able to gain our salvation and eventually sent to his Disciples the grace of the Holy Spirit.

That same Holy Spirit the Disciples received on the day of Pentecost has been given to each of us on the day of our Confirmation. Now, more than ever, we rely on all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to keep our minds and hearts focused on the hope and promise that comes to us on Easter Sunday.

While we are unable to gather as a Spiritual family in our Parish Churches during this Holy Week, we are still together through our daily prayers, spiritual and corporal works of mercy, live-streamed Masses, Divine Mercy, Eucharistic Adoration and Holy Week Liturgies.

Our combined prayers are needed now more than ever. The efforts that each of us makes daily to reach out and help the most vulnerable members of our parishes and communities is a living testimony to the power of God's presence active in our communities.

On-going donations to the Food Pantry, our continued financial support for our parishes, out-reach efforts to one another thru phone calls, e-mails, text messages, Facebook and other appropriate social networking are helping in ways that make these difficult days more acceptable.

Please join Fr Fulgens and I as we live-stream our Holy Week Liturgies. The updated schedule for our Holy Week Liturgies will be posted on our parish Facebook account and web site.

Thank you for your continued prayers, financial support for your parishes, and the many ways that you are helping your fellow parishioners, family, friends and members of your community and places of employment. Together, we pray, through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, for healing, protection, for all who are sick and suffering, for those who have died, for First Responders, health care workers, all who are work daily to meet the basic needs of our society and especially for a swift end to this worldwide pandemic.