

My dearest Friends,

I am writing you on this 4th Sunday of Lent, and I will continue writing you every weekend the homily on the Sunday readings until we can get together again to celebrate the Mass as a parish family around the altar.

My hope is that soon we can record the Sunday Mass and be able to livestream it. As you know, it takes time to figure it out with all the laws and regulations such as music licensing and so forth. In the mean time I encourage you to make use of the ones that are online or EWTN channel.

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032220.cfm>

Ephesians 5:8-14

Brothers and sisters: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.

The gospel of John 9:1-41

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him,

“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day.

Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

The readings for today’s liturgy, especially the second and the gospel talk about darkness and light, blindness and recovering sight. Jesus Christ restored the sight of the blind man and Paul reaffirmed at the end of the second reading insert that Christ is the one who gives us light.

My friends during this stressful time we are starting to live, as you have heard me saying, “the Lord speaks to us every day through the liturgy readings.” This time where schools are closed, people are working minimal hours and some are asked to stay home, it is a time to follow closely and with responsibility the instructions that are given by our leaders and trust always in God who is in charge of all.

What do we see in the Gospel? A blind man from birth. The blind man doesn’t have a name. Jesus is asked who, the man himself is in responsible for his blindness, or his parents. Jesus answer is definite, it was not the man who sinned, neither his parents, but it is so ‘that the works of God might be made visible through him.’

In a way, we are the blind man. We are born blind. Trusting in what we have, in who we are. Living our lives in our way, perhaps thinking only in my needs and not thinking on the other. Thinking we have control in everything, we are in charge of life by deciding who has the right to live and who doesn’t. All, all the things that you and I are facing.

This condition we learned it by the society we live in. it becomes part of our living that even we don’t question. This way of living that, day by day, drives us away from the source of our lives, our Creator, who made us and wants back.

Perhaps, we might be questioning about this Pandemic? Is this the end of times? Perhaps is God not in charge? We might be afraid of the unknown result of this pandemic. Here we are with hand's tide. My hope is that this doesn't get worse and our leaders make a decision soon instead of waiting in order to make a drastic decision. We need to learn from Italy, Spain and other countries. And if our leaders are not making the decision we need to make our own by limiting social gatherings and sanitizing ourselves properly.

We might be like Jesus' disciples in the Gospel, "why is this happening? What have we done wrong? Who is in charge of what is happening? I just hearing Jesus echo, "*Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.*" Again, **"That the work of God might be made visible through [it]"**

The news had shown that everybody is turning their eyes toward the skies, to God. This virus is attacking everybody, all age range, all social status range, all ethnicities. Here is when we see that there is not distinction here on this illness. We try to control it, but by ourselves, we can't. We need human and divine intervention. Medical doctors and nurses working hard, putting their own lives in danger long hours, but trying to accompany those who are sick. Scientists trying to mix chemical elements so they can at least control it. God is giving the strength, comfort, wisdom to us all.

Furthermore, first time in our lives that we cannot gather together around the altar as a parish family, not able to receive the Body and Blood our Lord, especially now when we would like to receive the precious sacrament and gather to offer our prayers to our heavenly Father. We are encouraged to do a Spiritual Communion which is a good act, but it won't replace the physical act of receiving and consuming the fruits of the altar, the food for the journey.

My dear friends, yes we are going through difficult moments but we know that God always provides. We experienced it as a parish last year, we can read it in Holy Scripture. God continues being faithful to His promise, even though we are unfaithful.

You and I have been baptized, you and I might have been in darkness, this is the time to see the hand of God and turn toward Him. We are in the Lenten season. A time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Now that we might have more time with our families, more time in-house, it will be a good time to redirect our lives, our spiritual life and turn to God who is in charge of all. We are finding out that there is no other way. This pandemic is a sign that can touch us, touch our families. It touches the poor or the rich, priests or laity, legal or illegal; no matter what skin color we have, no matter which faith we profess.

This is not a time to block ourselves with fear, nor just taking this pandemic time lightly. We need to be like the blind man, to give testimony of our Lord who came to give us light, who came to transform us and stop living our lives in so earthly a way which is bringing destruction of our "Common House."

Why not pick a specific time, like Europe, that at 8:00 pm people go to the balcony and give applause to the medical doctors and those who are in the health system. And after that everybody goes in and pray as a family. The Catholic families are praying the rosary. This is

being done by other countries. This little action just show the support for those who are giving their lives and see the important of my neighbor the sense of having someone next to me. Also together we pray to God for healing, strength and the eternal rest for those who have died.

For us Catholics is a great sign of unity. That's what we do every time we gather together around the altar. We gather together to celebrate the divine sacrifice that Our Lord Jesus Christ left us.

This is a time to reflect how we see the sacred sacrifice of the Mass. Sometimes we take it for granted. The importance of worshiping together as a parish family, preparing ourselves ahead of time by reading the readings before Mass, singing and participating actively in the liturgy, and receiving the fruits of the altar properly.

Let us continue reflecting and seeking for ways to grow in our relationship with God and one another. Let us continue offering our prayers to God with the whole Church for Gods mercy and blessings during this time of distress. I have my feelings that we and all the world will learn something good from this time. There is no Easter celebration without the passion and dead.

I will continue offering the daily Mass at the Oratory in the rectory. This coming week, my secretary forgot to put the *Pro Populo* Mass. I will be saying it on Friday, as you see there is no intention. This is a time where I am using more of my time to pray. This is not vacation time for me or the parish staff. I am available for you in any spiritual need. Don't hesitate to call us.

May the Lord continue blessings us and keep us safe!

Fr. Raul