

Easter - 5th Sunday

- Ever since the beginning of time...
 - we have sought to construct buildings...
 - that would bridge the gap...
 - between the temporal and eternal...
 - between the earthly and heavenly planes.
- We are certainly blessed...to have a beautiful church here at Blessed Sacrament!
 - And it's so good to be able to have our first public Masses again...
 - even if they are limited to only 10 people.
 - It gives me great hope.
 - The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass...is a grace worth fighting for!
 - We do have a beautiful church here...
 - but among my favorites...
 - is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.
 - It was built over the places where Jesus was crucified and buried...
 - and I had the privilege of being locked inside that church...
 - overnight on Good Friday...
 - a few months before I was ordained a priest.
 - I may have shared this story with you before...
 - but I wouldn't trade that experience for anything in the world!
 - At one point I was walking and praying the rosary
 - and I was so tired that I almost fell asleep...
 - while I was still walking!
 - But at another point...I had a profound sense of the Lord's presence.
 - And He seemed to say in my heart:
 - *"Some day...all of this will be gone."*
 - He was talking about the church itself.
 - As sacred and holy as that place is...
 - someday it's going to be gone.
 - Pretty ominous right?
 - But if we think about it...in one way or another it must be true:
 - At the time...
 - the church was in incredible disrepair...
 - in danger of falling apart in fact...
 - because the different groups of Christians in charge of it...
 - they just couldn't seem to get along.
 - Then there is the fighting...that goes on around the city itself...
 - between the Jews...Muslims and Christians.
 - Some day it could be destroyed because of that.
 - But then extending it out even further...
 - someday...millions...billions of years from now...
 - even this planet will be gone.
 - So as beloved as our Churches are...they cannot last forever.

- But they sure are important for now aren't they?
 - Especially after all we are going through!
 - They help lift our hearts to heaven...each time we come to pray.
- And yet...
 - as hard as we work to build these places...
 - to keep them clean and repaired...to keep them open!
 - how much harder do we need to work...
 - for what eternally endures.
- There's something similar going on in our first reading.
 - There is concern about the daily distribution of food.
 - People need to eat.
 - So arrangements had to be made.
 - But look at the real reason...why this issue is so important...
 - It's not for the sake of food...as important as that is...
 - The real priority...is with the Word of God.
 - Once the food is taken care of...
 - then the Word of God...
 - can better be proclaimed.
 - Both are needed...both are important...but only one of them eternally so.
- This is a good lesson for us.
 - We need to be concerned with the temporal world around us.
 - It is important.
 - But our focus...our priority...needs to be on the eternal.
- So when it comes to things like...
 - feeding the hungry...clothing the naked...taking care of the poor
 - They are vital!
 - And I think it's relatively easy for us...
 - to pitch in and help in these areas.
 - Or...to donate money to good causes...
 - that support these efforts...
 - because we often get that feel good response in return.
 - People tend to appreciate our help.
 - And that's obviously...a really big need right now...
 - that's only going to grow.
- But even as we care for others that way...
 - we have to remember...
 - there is no poverty...like spiritual poverty...
 - of not knowing the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.
 - Everyone needs Him...
 - everyone hungers and thirsts for Him...
 - whether they know it or not.

- But when it comes to trying to satisfy that need in others...
- Well the response...
 - it isn't always so gratifying is it?
 - It takes a lot of courage...just to share our faith.
- Ultimately...
 - the Lord is building His Kingdom in our midst...
 - Not out of brick and mortar...
 - He's building it out of human souls.
 - 1 Peter affirms this:
 - *“Come to the Lord, a living stone, rejected by men but approved, nonetheless, and precious in God's eyes. You too are living stones, built as an edifice of spirit into a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”* (1 Pt 2:4-5)
 - Hopefully some of that has come into better focus...
 - as you've been praying at home...
 - in your domestic churches.
 - Offering to God the very sacrifice of your lives.
 - And there are many more people out there...
 - that God wants to use to build up His Kingdom...
 - whether we can pray in 'this' church or not.
 - So continue to use this extraordinary time...as I've mentioned before...
 - by praying for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be outpoured...
 - upon you, your family and our Church as a whole.
 - We're going to need all those gifts...
 - to help us take care of our brothers and sisters physical needs
 - but most especially...the needs of their souls.