

Continuing Lockdown  
September, 2020

One has only to watch the news on TV to know how much the pandemic lockdown has affected all of us. We are often found as persons isolated from our customary activity. Perhaps at first we managed to enjoy some aspects of being in a slow down of our hurried activities. However, as time has gone on we find the days adding up to weeks, and weeks to months. We seek news of when this all might end. The worst timing I have been given is probably around the end of March or in June of 2021.

I have to say that there have been some good results from this life as a contemplative of sorts. I have had to make a reality of my faith that Jesus really is present in many, many varied ways. If I look out my window I may see the trees with their full blossomed leaves. Green is the color of hope, I once was told, when we learned about the colors of the vestments priests wore. So, I can admit to the Lord that I need a lot of hope. I also come to realize that my faith is active, but in its own way. It leads me further on as time goes on. I arrive at a time when I simply have to think about charity, or love. It is love at its deepest meaning, separated from the bodily collateral that too often in life we assign to it.

I have the privilege of saying Mass, or better praying the Mass, in my room here at Our Lady. I have had this for quite some time. There are days when walking over to the chapel or church can be a challenge. I see the rain as my worst enemy. Try walking with a walker and holding an umbrella! But going to the chapel does become a necessity for me. It brings me to Mass with at least some people. It makes all the difference. It reminds me that I need God's People, and yes, they need me, too.

I have many wishes that come and go through my many days of this pandemic. I wish that I could read more. My eyes tire quickly, and I have to guess that being in my ninth decade has something to do with it. I started reading *The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann. I had read it years ago. As I read it now, I think I understand his writing so much more. He writes about time. I have previously offered that to you in an insert. He speaks of the relationship of people. This was a theme of my interrupted Lenten meeting.

I have spoken and written often of presence and relationship. I see both as worthy of my thoughts and my attempt to bring to them a spiritual meaning. Clearly the most important relationship is ours with God and God with us. Yet, we must not undervalue relationships with others. We see ourselves as His disciples bringing to others our own understanding, or a touch of wisdom perhaps. We bring to others the fruits of our faith, if it is strong and firm and active. Most of all we make ourselves better images of God, just as we should be in His divine design for us at our creation.

This time also has proved a time to examine where I am in my search for at least some perfections of soul, and tell the Lord that I adore. Thank and love Him as best I can.

One of the advantages to being in this enclosure has been the chance to use my memory to bring me remembrance of a past that had many joys and much happiness. I have found myself thinking of my seminary days. While there I certainly awaited with longing for the days to come to an end. [Just as we do with this pandemic's days.] That would bring me the gift of being a priest, and certify that my wishes and desires were approved by the Church, and so by God Himself. I recall how chilly May 8, 1954 was as I left the seminary to go to the cathedral. How quickly my mind turned to the mystery of the Ordination rite, as it was in those days. I still see my Mother as showing her own approval, and I recall my Sister (the best sister in the world) crying tears of joy.

My mind also goes to the great adventure of being sent to Rome to study. I had never travelled much. And there I was very much on my own. There were priests in Rome from Philadelphia whom I knew. Yet, the Bishop had told me to be sure to make his seminarians there knew they were now seminarians of our relatively new Diocese. Rome is always an adventure, and living there was a challenge. So much to enjoy and so much to study, and finally to write a long dissertation for my doctorate degree. Perhaps that is why I managed one day during this pandemic time to look at printed excerpts. I can only say I wonder how I did it. And I still feel I must stick to my conclusions as worthy of my theme.

I recall, too, the first summer, when I was told that I had to stay in Europe and travel around. What wonders. I saw Germany and France and northern Italy. There was Lourdes, and the Rue de Babylon where I found refuge with the Blessed Sacrament Fathers in Paris. I saw the Mona Lisa, and judged it worthy, but not my favorite Madonna. Well, I guess that I like most of them too much to give them ratings in some way. So many tell me that I have Mary as my Mother and as Christ's gift to all of us.

I also visited Ireland, and managed to go to the place where my Grandfather had lived. I said Mass for him there in the Convent of the Sisters of Loretto (Mother Teresa's first community). The Mass had to be in the Convent, since the Church was locked on Saturday morning. The pastor went fishing. I think here of how he must have endured his immigrant status at a time when the Irish were treated so poorly – enduring a status not many recall in their study of former days in our great Nation. How lucky I have been to know about the faith my grandparents had, and how they loved our country.

At the end of my journeys I came back to Rome. I walked into the chapel at my residence at the *Casa at Via dell' Umilta 30*. There I knelt down and thanked Mary as *Mater et Fiducia* for her protection during days of travel. Now I pray to her to watch over me as I journey from God to God. I advise my readers to do the same. We all need a Mother's love these days.

*God bless and love you always!*  
*Monsignor David Morrison*