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St. John Vianney Catholic Church

*"I will show you the way to heaven."
– St. John Vianney*



March 29, 2020

SJV Newsletter – 5th Sunday of Lent

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Praised be Jesus Christ! I pray you and your family are well as you navigate through this new and stressful time. This Sunday we have the shortest verse in John's Gospel, "Jesus wept". Our Gospel for this Sunday recounts the death and raising of Lazarus. Jesus certainly experiences feelings. The Jews fell into the belief that if Jesus loved Lazarus, Jesus would have prevented his sickness and death. They didn't understand how Jesus could both love Lazarus and allow him to remain in his suffering and eventually die. Jesus uses the death of Lazarus to show the glory of God, the power of God, God's power over death and decay. This is where faith teaches and science is silent. God cares about us!

The enemy might try to convince us of the lie that God does not love those who sick, suffering or dying. In our Gospel today John tells us that is not true. Those whom God loves in a special way are drawn into the mystery of the cross. God is aware of suffering, of pain and of feelings. We hear that Jesus wept. Why does He? St. Augustine says, "Why did Christ weep except to teach us to weep". Jesus is aware of the reality and horror of suffering and he participates in it. We are to also acknowledge that evil and to weep. Jesus allows it because there is a greater glory to be revealed! St. Peter Chrysologos says, "for Christ, it was more important to conquer death than to cure a disease. He showed His love for His friend not by healing him but by calling him back from the grave. Instead of a remedy for his illness, he offered him the glory of rising from the dead". Jesus wants to conquer the enemy who appears to have the final say. Jesus conquers death for us.

In our days with so much concern about this virus and what it can do to our relatives and friends, remember that Jesus is the one who brings the greater victory. Jesus says, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matt. 10:28). The virus is limited in what it can do to humanity. Jesus is the one who brings life where we once only saw death. Do not let the virus keep you from loving one another. Perhaps you will experience a time of weeping for now, but remember in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matt. 5:4). The weeping is only for a time, because Jesus will bring the joy that has no end. I recall the words that Jesus gave to His apostles, "So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you" (John 16:22). Persevere in your daily prayers, in your faith in Jesus Christ, so that you may have the joy that will never go away!

I do wish to give you an update on some information that has been released from the diocese. Bishop Doherty has given a public message dated March 27 which you can find at <https://www.dol-in.org/response-to-current-news-events>. Please note that the Chrism Mass on Tuesday, April 7 is limited to a few people and will take place at 11am EDT. Not even all the priests in the diocese will be at the

Chrism Mass. There will be a link to stream the Mass if you desire which will be shared as it becomes available.

That also leads to the celebration of Holy Week and Easter. Bishop Doherty reached a consensus with the other bishops of Indiana that there will not be public liturgies during Holy Week which runs through the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. This is not saying that Holy Week is cancelled, but that there will not be public liturgies. This is sad news and still something that I try to wrap my head around with how Holy Week will be celebrated differently.

Just a reminder that Bishop Doherty has mandated the suspension of all public celebrations of the Mass, other liturgical services and gatherings of the faithful effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020 until further notice. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass from March 13, 2020 continues until further notice. It is not a permanent dispensation.

Last week I wrote that there are 10 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Hamilton County. Today I see that there are 83 confirmed cases by the Indiana State Department of Health. Please be responsible and loving to your neighbor to help prevent them from being sick. Encourage one another to persevere in the love of God and know that the COVID-19 cannot keep God from loving you!

The following website also has many helpful resources including online Mass, prayers, and other resources by publishers which have been made available to support prayer:

<http://usccb.org/about/communications/usccb-president-reflection-and-prayer-during-coronavirus.cfm>

Please remember to daily pray for all those affected by COVID-19. Here is a prayer of solidarity.

For all who have contracted coronavirus...We pray for care and healing.

For those who are particularly vulnerable...We pray for safety and protection.

For all who experience fear or anxiety...We pray for peace of mind and spirit.

For affected families who are facing difficult decisions between food on the table or public safety...

We pray for policies that recognize their plight.

For those who do not have adequate health insurance...We pray that no family will face financial burdens alone.

For those who are afraid to access care due to immigration status...We pray for recognition of the God given dignity of all.

For our brothers and sisters around the world...We pray for shared solidarity.

For public officials and decision makers...We pray for wisdom and guidance.

Father, during this time may your Church be a sign of hope, comfort and love to all...

Grant peace...Grant comfort...Grant healing...Be with us, Lord. Amen.

In Christ,



Fr. Tony Rowland