

## **Pastoral Message**

**Fourth Sunday of Lent - March 22, 2020**

**Rev. Msgr. Edward C. Puleo**

This Sunday and every day, as myself and Father Hillier offer Mass for you and your intentions, you need to know that our hearts ache because we are unable to be in your presence. However, we are consoled in knowing that we can join our prayers to yours and yours to ours, with the assurance that God is listening; that God hears us!

These past days as I went to the supermarket and pharmacy, I whispered a prayer for the heroes I encountered along the way: cashiers, pharmacy workers, police officers and fire fighters. To this number we might add others especially our health care workers, government leaders: the president, governors, and mayors, along with the research scientists who we hope and pray will discover a cure that will finally help make our society “normal” again.

On Saturday morning I had 2 funerals. How sad to pray the words of the funeral liturgy with only a few people present to say farewell to their loved ones. Yet, how privileged to know that our precious Catholic faith gives us comfort wherever we might be.

If you could hear us preach our homilies this weekend, you would hear both of us speak about the gospel passage of Jesus healing the blind man. We are told that the disciples asked Jesus: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (John 9:2) Jesus answered: “It was no sin either of this man or of his parents. Rather it was to let God’s works show forth in him” (John 9:3). One of the lessons that this story teaches is that

physical evil is not always the result of sin and can be the occasion of spiritual good. The same might be said about the coronavirus. Things happen that have no easy answers!

We do not know the reason why God allows a person to be blind or why he allows other kinds of disabilities or illnesses such as the coronavirus. The gospel story of the man's blindness, however, was an occasion for the man to receive not only his physical sight but, more importantly, spiritual sight -- the gift of faith.

In keeping with the theme of Sunday's gospel we should give serious thought to the precious gift of our Catholic faith. Without this gift of faith we would be not only be spiritually blind but spiritually lost. It is only by reason of our faith that we know many truths about God that pertain to our salvation. We should thank God often for the gift of faith that we have received. We should resolve to make use of all the means that strengthen our faith, especially prayer and special devotion to the Blessed Virgin whom the Church calls "the woman of faith." Resolve to live your daily lives in the light of the gift of faith that we have received!