

July 25-26, 2020

Pastoral Message from Msgr. Puleo

As I previously noted in my pastoral messages, each Sunday and every day, as myself and Father Hillier offer Mass for you and your intentions, our hearts continue to ache, not only because we are unable to be in the presence of many of you, but due to the horrible things that continue to invade us — from outside the Church and from within.

In recent days the whole McCarrick matter is being rehashed in the media. I am not able to cover everything that has been reported from recent articles but I do join my voice to those who seek the final report on McCarrick that was promised many months ago by the Vatican. Remember, with you I am Catholic; for you I am a priest. As a Catholic, I am saddened and horrified by the revelations that have surfaced regarding the now disgraced ex-Cardinal-Archbishop McCarrick. If all they say about him is true I would be tempted, if the church was only a manmade institution, to leave and never return. But the Church is not manmade. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, divinely instituted by Christ. No matter how rotten some members may be, (even members of the hierarchy), it does not change the truth about our divinely instituted sacraments or the fact that Christ is our Redeemer and Savior who died for our sins and has given us a new birth through water and the Holy Spirit!

Then there is the other troubling news that our fellow Catholics who live in places like Africa and South America are being persecuted because of their Catholic faith. Bishop Luiz Fernando Lisboa of Mozambique's Pemba Diocese is an advocate for the needs of the more than 200,000 people who have been displaced by the violent insurgency. In June alone insurgents had beheaded 15 people in a week. Yet the bishop said "the world has no idea what is happening because of indifference."

In the mostly Catholic country of Venezuela "the dire economic situation, combined with the effects of the pandemic lockdown, has led to a crisis more severe than the biblical plagues in Egypt", said one local bishop. Under the socialist regime of Nicolas Maduro, the once rich country of Venezuela has been marred by violence and social upheaval. Some 96% of households in Venezuela are living in poverty. A family earns about three or four dollars a month. A carton of eggs costs two dollars and a kilo of cheese costs three dollars.

Meanwhile, in our own country many of our cities continue to experience mayhem. Statues of Jesus, our Blessed Mother, Saint Junipera Serra, and others have been destroyed. Churches have been graffitied and now statues of Christopher Columbus have become the latest target. Within the last few days the mayor of Chicago removed a beloved statue of Columbus from Grant Park in the middle of the night. In other cities statues of Columbus and others have been destroyed or beheaded. Surprisingly, in the City of Worcester, MA the city council voted to allow the statue of Columbus to remain due to the fact that it was donated in honor of Italian Americans. They noted that Columbus has long been an American Catholic and Italian-American folk hero. They have seen his pioneering voyage from Europe as a way of validating their presence in a sometimes hostile majority-Protestant country and as the means by which Christianity reached the New World.

As we continue to struggle with the on-going pandemic, allow God's peace to comfort you during these unpredictable summer months. Know too that God is listening; that God hears us when we raise our voices in prayer, especially at Mass.

God bless you!
Msgr. Edward C. Puleo