

Homiletic Reflection on the 4th Sunday of Lent, 2020

Fr. Joseph Scalco, CSJ

Today, the fourth Sunday of Lent, is called “*Laetare*” Sunday, a Latin word meaning, ‘*Be joyful!*’ Ironically, there is no reason to be joyful while the global population is under the threat of the Corona-virus, which has upset the confidence of world leaders and has disrupted the lives of millions.

Irony is also present in the Gospel of today, known as the healing of blind man. The irony is in the incredulity of the Pharisees, who, as seeing people – not visually impaired – attempt to disprove the miraculous healing by Jesus in spite of the evidence given by the man born blind. Not believing against the evidence is preposterous, as it would be absurd to deny the existence of COVID-19 while thousand people have died around the world.

This Sunday remains a joyful Sunday in spite of the scourge of this disease. We believe that a spring of hope will ensue after this time of sufferance and anxieties. We are hopeful people. God is with us. He never abandons his faithful ones. There is sadness in not being able to be present physically at mass and to worship as a faith community at St. Jude. We comply with the restrictions that have been imposed because it is the prudent way to contain the spreading of the disease.

Someone posted online a reflection that I translated in English and partially edited while respecting the somber tone of the unknown author.

“And suddenly we woke up one morning, and everything changed: the magic stopped at Disneyland; the Chinese Grand Wall was not strong enough; New York City has become desolate; all paths do not lead to Rome anymore. There is a virus that has crowned itself as King, and we came to realize our fragility. We do not know what caused it, whether our irresponsibility or some human evil plot; but its threat is real and everyday stronger. Those who joke about it are not funny and do not make people laugh. Hugs and kisses have become dangerous gestures that may hurt like a weapon; the shortage of products proves our egoism; we soothe ourselves with the thought that this disease affects only the elderly population, as if their lives did not count much; we defend our right “to live and to let live” while we deny that the disease proves our fragility and lack of control; we live in a planet that has put on a mask to cover our vulnerability and pride, and washes its hands to disclaim its responsibility like.... Pontius Pilate did with Jesus...”

Well, this is a sad assessment of the status. We believe that, yes, we have become blind to our sinfulness and hardened at admitting our wrongdoing, but we believe that God is forgiving and is with us; he accompanies us on our journey and purifies us through this time of suffering to lead us into the joy of the resurrection. I heard the birds chirping, have seen two robins feeding, and I have noticed the first flowers blossoming. Spring is coming. Jesus is the spring of new life in his triumph over pain, fears and death. This is the good news!

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