

My neighbor recently got vaccinated. While waiting her turn, her grandson called from California.

“What are you up to, grandma?”

“Waiting in line to get my first vaccination. What are you up to, Trevor?”

“Oh, just watching the Martian landing. You know that NASA robot that just landed on Mars? “

When the call ended, she couldn't help but wonder: “Here I am waiting in a parking lot waiting to be vaccinated during a global pandemic talking to my grandson 3,000 miles away while *he* watches a spacecraft land on Mars. It feels like science fiction but it isn't.”

This is 2021. This is my world, our world.

The gospel tells us that this is the world that God loves (John 3:14-21).

The gift of that love bestows incredible freedom: The freedom to love or to hate; to injure or to heal; the freedom to seek the light of truth as well as the freedom to stay stuck in the darkness of a lie; the freedom to make great sacrifices for the sake of others and the freedom to live for oneself, and for oneself *only*.

The world God so loves

We live in a world where people, everyday people choose *all of the above*, everyday. And, because of the choices that we and other people make, the world is what it is.

But God does not love it less...

In the midst of this crazy, beautiful world, God gives us the grace of a path, and not only a path, but a person, flesh and blood, skin and bone, a beating heart. He gives us Jesus, his son.

This divine gift, bestows power to live in this world:

Strength to change the things that we can change; the serenity to accept what we cannot; the grace to embrace the opportunities an earlier generation could only dream of; blessings that a future generation may someday wish they had.

This beloved Son imparts insight to live with purpose, even when the world we grew up with is disappearing. He even bestows a vision to face our deaths, not with fear or regret, but with hope.

This path to walk with Christ, the gift of the Father, who so loves the world, is one we must choose for ourselves. No one can choose it for you. Because only *you* can live *your* life.

Pray for the grace to walk the path that began at the fount of your baptism, seek to walk it with more energy and zest.

So pray, that despite the challenges and changes life will bring, we might live life fully, a blessing to others,
in this our world,
the world God so loves.

Fr. Steven Labaire