

3rd Sunday Lent

How ya' feelin'? A little anxious? A little uncomfortable?

I think that's normal. When we are dealing with the unknown, when we have little control about what's going on, then it's easy to get knocked off-balance. And then you add all the precautions related to the virus and the news stories that surround it, it just adds to the discomfort.

It adds to our discomfort, because it makes us consider our own mortality

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That's not the most joyful topic of conversation. I'm not really jazzed about the subject myself. Thinking about my own fragile humanity and my mortality are not exactly at the top of my list of fun things to do. But it is something that all of us have to face eventually.

One day, someday, all of us will have to stand before the judgment seat of God and give an accounting of our lives.

A big part of the Christian life is preparing for that day. This time of Lent is a privileged time to consider our spiritual lives. It's a time to look at the good in our lives and strengthen it; and to look at what is bad, and bring it to the Lord so that he can forgive it and heal it.

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Sometimes when we are confronted with something unexpected, like the coronavirus, it can scrape some of the rust off our spiritual lives and bring us to new understandings and insights. It can actually deepen our faith. That's basically what happens in the Gospel today. The Samaritan woman is just going about her business; she's living her normal routine, and she meets Jesus unexpectedly. And in their conversation, Jesus tells her that he knows about the details of her spiritual life

He lays out the facts for her. He doesn't insult her; he doesn't humiliate her; he doesn't condemn her. He speaks the truth—pure and simple.

And at first, the lady doesn't want to hear it. The words of Jesus are making her uncomfortable, and she tries to change the subject. But a little while later, she is telling all her friends about Jesus and recognizing him as the savior of the world.

That unexpected encounter with Jesus opened her heart to faith, and that faith led to joy and peace

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Jesus says, the truth will set you free. And Jesus himself is Truth. Through our Lenten practices of prayer, penance, and almsgiving, we open ourselves more and more to the divine physician. We open our hearts to the savior, who takes away the sins of the world.

What we have done in the past can be wiped away. The tendencies that lead us into sin can be broken. And the more and more we are purified, the greater our peace becomes. We are strengthened against the unexpected. It has less power to knock us off balance.

Jesus came into this world to save sinners. He knows us better than we know ourselves. His words are spirit and life. And the words of the savior can release us from bondage to sin, so that we may live in the freedom of the children of God