

Fr. Curtis Miller

March 21-22, 2020

Homily for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sun. of Lent

This week has been hard for many of us. We've seen something that many of us would have never thought possible even just a few weeks ago. I'm talking, of course, about the news that Tom Brady is leaving the New England Patriots. And, on top of that, we continue to deal with the impact of the spread of the Coronavirus. On a serious note, we pray for the people around the world and even here in Vermont who have lost their lives, those who are still sick, and the brave nurses and doctors who sacrifice of themselves to care for the sick. It's difficult that we are not able to gather together in church for Mass, but we continue to be united with each other in prayer, including this video Mass.

Things are not always as they seem, nor do things always happen the way we might expect. This is especially true in the spiritual life. The prophet Samuel did not expect that David, the youngest son of his family, would be the one chosen by God. And yet David would become one of Israel's greatest kings. Jesus' disciples, and later the Pharisees, thought that the blind man must have been afflicted because he had sinned. Yet Jesus showed them that his apparent disability was an opportunity to reveal God's power. Do you or I sometimes feel small and insignificant, like David? Well, we can be confident that God has a great plan for us. Do you and I see our sicknesses or other afflictions—even this current pandemic—as a punishment from God? No. They are rather opportunities for you and me to witness and experience the awesome power of God. We just have to allow Jesus to heal our spiritual blindness, to give us new vision, so that we might see life and the world in the light of God.

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And now, let us continue our journey through the Stations of the Cross.

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time. Have you or I kept up with the Lenten penances and practices we resolved on Ash Wednesday to do? Or have we fallen away from them? Have we been resisting temptations or instead have we been falling back into bad habits? Have we gone to Confession, only to fall back into the same sins? Unfortunately, many of us probably have. I used to think that this station and the ninth, when Jesus falls again, were redundant. We've already reflected on Jesus' fall; let's consider something else. Now, though, I think I understand it a little better. Just as you and I fall into sin, again and again, so Jesus fell again and again under His heavy cross. Jesus shows us that no matter how many times we might fall, He will never abandon us. He comes down to us at our lowest, when we say, "Why do I even try? I'm just going to fall again." Jesus lifts us up, and carries us onward.

The Eighth Station: Jesus Comforts the Women of Jerusalem. When you or I suffer, we usually become focused on our own problems. That's why it would be understandable if Jesus was only able to think of His own suffering at this moment. Yet when He meets these women of Jerusalem, lamenting His suffering, Jesus' heart is moved with pity for them. He speaks words of comfort to them. That's incredible! In the midst of His own suffering, Jesus turns His gaze towards us with pity and love. He knows all the trials that we will have to endure. Jesus looks at us now and sees our deepest sufferings, the pains that we have never told anyone else about. With tender love, Jesus lifts that suffering from our shoulders, transfers it over to His cross, and then staggers onward toward Calvary. Let's not let Him go forward alone. Let's continue to accompany Him on this painful journey of love for us.