



St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Community

A Message from the Pastor

March 20, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

In the Gospel reading for today, Jesus encounters a scribe who asks him, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Of course, Jesus answers with rabbinical precision and masterful presentation. The scribe said, “Well said, teacher!” and further confirmed by repeating what Jesus had just said. Jesus answered the scribe and said, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” The scribe was masterful in his creating copies of the Torah mouthing each word as he wrote it on a clean animal skin and mouthing each word as it was written. Jesus recognized in him the presence of the Word of God and thus the “Kingdom” was not far away.

My brothers and sisters, during this time of separation, denial and hardship we may feel many emotions, including depression, anxiety, loneliness and fear. As faithful Christians, however, we should never feel separated from God and His love for us. Perhaps we can feel this proximity by contemplating, as the scribe in the Gospel, every word that comes from the mouth of God. We can mouth those words slowly and with conviction as we read the books of the Bible. Again, what we do with this time in the desert is up to us and we can allow the blossoming of God’s grace to occur in our daily journey or we can become barren, desolate and filled with death. Let’s choose life and allow that divine spark within us to renew us each day as we anticipate the arrival of Holy Week. We may be approaching a very simple expression of the most powerful week of events and only viewing what I can broadcast to you, but I think it may end up becoming our most special celebrations yet.

Last evening, new restrictions have been placed upon non-essential workplaces and services. This directive from our civil authorities and our Church forces us to adjust our activities, staying at home, not gathering, and following these orders for the health of our society. While I was contemplating having “drive thru” confessions we are now cancelling this since we know it would bring our most vulnerable. Rather, as our faith teaches us, please trust in God’s loving mercy and make your Act of Contrition in the privacy of your own room. Our faith is stronger as we continue to join in prayer for one another from our own place of prayer.

Finally, while the news continues to speak of grim statistics and new restrictive directives, we can best serve the Lord by remaining positive in the face of challenge. Turn over each day of your struggle to the Lord.

Please do not forget your parish during these difficult times in your prayer. Your staff is still working and praying even though we cannot be with you in public. Our school children are still learning from a distance and our teachers are online each day. We need to continue to pay all our bills to remain fiscally sound and open. Thank you to those who have mailed in your donations or signed up for online giving.

Finally, this afternoon, I just finished a conference call with the Archbishop. Due to the civil orders in place and our need to comply we must continue with the directive to remain at home for the most part. This is very important for each of you to follow and not be the cause of spreading the virus. St. Luke is now effectively closed until at least April 19. With that being said, there will be no masses, meetings, or gatherings of any sort. We will not be able to hold Holy Week or Easter celebrations. This is very painful for all of us and certainly a first in my

priesthood. I am going to contemplate very brief office hours each day mainly for phone calls or for mail/package delivery; otherwise, the parish offices are closed until further notice.

We are all in this together. Everyone is feeling imprisoned and restless. Let us hold one another in prayer as we move through this very difficult time in our lives. Let us pray particularly for those suffering from the virus and those who have already died.

Know of your priests' daily prayers for you as we journey together.

Please visit our Parish Website for continued COVID-19 information related to parish activities and previous e-communications: <http://stluketemplecity.org/covid-19-notice>.

Blessings,

Fr. Mark