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4TH Sunday in Lent Year A

March 22, 2020

“ARE WE THERE YET”

Opening Remark:

As we have journeyed through Lent, we have been very distracted by the world’s fears related to COVID 19 and its potential devastating effects on all of us and our loved ones. This Lent, I have noticed in virtually all those around me how fearful we can become of the unknown. How quickly we try to stand on our own and forget that God loves us. Only with Jesus as our focus can we realize that with God’s love there is nothing to fear. Our fear of death (though a natural human feeling) has to be overcome by our faith in God’s love.

For us as believers these hard times are our opportunity to lean on our faith in God and to realize that God carries us in these and all our times of trouble and fear.

If we don’t believe this, then we are truly.... NOT THERE YET.

Am I ready to put my lie in God’s hands?

It’s a question that we must pray over and ask God to give us the strength and wisdom to put our lives in His hands, not allow fear to paralyze us.

We must allow Him to guide us through to the reward He desires for each of us in His divine plan.

What a great opportunity we have to answer God’s call to prayer, service to the sick and the helpless! What a great opportunity to show our love for our fellow brothers and sisters.

This parish always answers the call and I know we will answer this one.

God Sees The Heart:

In today’s first reading, the prophet, Samuel, learns that “he is not there yet”. Sent by God to Jesse of Bethlehem to anoint one of his eight sons as king of Israel, Samuel was ready to run ahead of the Lord and anoint the wrong son. God stopped him in mid-thought and taught Samuel, and us, some valuable lessons.

1. God has great plans for us, which are far better than ours.
2. Our challenge is to put our lives in the hands of God who:
Knows more than we do
Knows better than we do
Sees the entire picture, including the future while we see only a small portion.
3. God reads our thoughts and wants to perfect them to align with God’s will. He does this through:

The Scriptures

Church Teaching

The wisdom of those who love us and truly care about our well-being.

Are we paying attention and acting accordingly?

4. Do our efforts and important life decisions fail to bear the fruit we hoped for or leave us feeling less than satisfied? Has the fear of COVID 19 overwhelmed you? Try this- Give **the Lord full sway over your plans, thoughts, words and actions. Doing that will help you to get there.**
5. **Is God directing your steps, (Where you go)**
Influencing your words (What you say)
Transforming your actions, (What you do)?
If not, who or what is? News reports, fear of death, fear of losing wealth, What?????????

David Knew Him:

Psalm 23 is written by a shepherd, David, about the Good Shepherd.

David was a man handpicked by God to be ruler of Israel. God said, "I have found David.... a man after my own heart; he will carry out my every wish" (Acts 13:22)

David knew God's favor in many ways. God saw to it that David was successful in battle even when the odds were against **him because David knew that victory came when the battle was the Lord's. Does this sound like us?**

Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, declares, "He (God) has raised up for us a mighty savior, born of the house of His servant David" (Luke 1:69). Even when David sinned, he humbly and immediately turned to God in repentance. A humble spirit and contrite heart are keys to oneness with the Lord.

When following the example of David, even if the odds are against us (as they appear to be now) the battle will be won.

Healing Blindness:

Today's Gospel features a blind man progressively drawing closer to Jesus, much like we are trying to do in our Lenten journey, This blind man is doing this while "religious leaders" build walls of separation much as COVID 19 has done for many

Jesus' initial encounter with the man born blind is a beautiful example of:

- God's expansive love
- His generous mercy
- His unlimited miracle working power.

Without being asked, Jesus initiated contact with the blind man, prescribed the solution to his problem, and required his cooperation in the miracle working process by telling him "Go wash in the pool of Siloam" (John 9:7)

The Grueling interrogation that followed, conducted by the Pharisees, was meant to break down the blind man's faith and prove Jesus as a breaker of the law because He healed on the Sabbath.

- The devious plot backfired
- The Blind man's faith was actually strengthened, and Jesus' accusers were shown to be the truly blind because they saw the miracle working power of God and tried to destroy it.

Anyone who ignores or comes in direct opposition to the will and the work of God is setting themselves up for misery and failure.

- Let's notice the faith progression expressed by the formerly blind man. When asked who healed him, he responded "**the man** called Jesus." As the grilling became more intense, he identified Jesus as "**a prophet**" Later conversing with Jesus, he worshiped Him and called Him, "**Lord**"

HE GOT IT!! HE IS NOW THERE!

The point of this account in Luke's Gospel is to challenge us to reflect on our faith progression.

Have we grown during this Lenten season? Too often many are comfortable with an arm-length relationship with the Lord. One that may acknowledge Jesus as a good man or even a prophet with wonderful words and deeds **but stops short of the total surrender to Jesus as Lord of our lives**, the lives that we are talking about with what is going on right this very day? Are we giving Him primary position in all we think, say and do?

ARE WE THERE YET?

Closing Comments:

In this difficult time,

- If we put our total trust in Him
- If we fear not what He has in the future for us
- If we are willing to accept His will

THEN AND ONLY THEN ARE WE THERE!!!!