

## DAY 22

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray. When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land. Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid." Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

*The Gospel of Saint Mark 6:45-52*

*Do not be afraid.* I was recently speaking with an old friend about the fear that so many are experiencing right now. He recounted a story from one his deployments to the Middle East and the first time he was shot at by the enemy. Fortunately, they missed. But he recounted that from that moment his life had changed forever. It impacted the way he saw everything from life to death; from his everyday work to his faith. He told me, 'at that moment you realize that there are things you have no control over. It wasn't my time and had no control over when it would be my time. At that moment all fear passed and I was freer than ever because I was not a prisoner of anxiety or fear. There are things beyond our control.'

My friends, we have no control over this pandemic. Yes, there are things we can do to mitigate the spread and best practices to avoid catching this virus. We wash our hands and keep our distance so that our hospitals do not get overrun. Still, people will get sick. It can seem hopeless and we can feel helpless. Fear and anxiety can set in. But, fear and anxiety are not from God. They are the work of the devil. He uses fear and anxiety because they turn us in on ourselves and away from God and others.

This Lent has been a gift from God to us. An opportunity to slow down and reflect on what matters most. I pray you have used this time wisely and well by praying, reading, and reflecting on God's will and love for you. All of us are destined to die at some point. We have no say over when it will be. The only fear we ought to have is fear of not being prepared.

So, prepare now. Each day is a gift to be able to start anew and say, "Today, I will be a saint." In the end we cannot be afraid to live our lives. And our lives are given to us by God to "know, love and serve Him... so that we can be with Him for eternity in the next life." Take courage. It is going to be okay. It is all grace. It is all in God's hands.

The following quote comes from a very powerful prayer, the *Novena of Surrender to the Will of God* composed by Father Don Dolindo Ruotolo † 1882-1970. There is a link to it on our website under the “Prayers” tab.

You see evil growing instead of weakening?

Do not worry,

Close your eyes and say to me with faith:

*“Thy will be done, You take care of it.”*

I say to you that I will take care of it,  
and that I will intervene as does a doctor  
and I will accomplish miracles when they are needed.

Do you see that the sick person is getting worse?

Do not be upset, but close your eyes and say

*“You take care of it.”*

I say to you that I will take care of it,  
and that there is no medicine more powerful  
than my loving intervention.

By my love, I promise this to you.

### **Thank you**

Each weekend there is a basket into which visitors are dropping their envelopes. Thank you for your continued financial sacrifice for our parish. We are so grateful to all who have subscribed to online giving and to those who have mailed in their weekly envelopes. We realize that this situation has placed an emotional and financial burden on many of you. Please know that I remember you in my daily Mass intentions.

This situation has also put a strain on our parish’s budget and has the potential to impact our mission. If you are able, I ask that you please consider signing up for online giving or mailing in your weekly envelopes. A new “Text to Give” option has also been developed, enabling you to make a weekly donation to your parish on your smart phone. To access information regarding this innovative form of giving as well as our online giving program, please go to our parish website or call us, we will gladly walk you through the process.

Please pray, join me in praying for our first responders, our doctors and nurses, and all those in our Catholic ministries who are helping on the front lines. I pray for you all constantly that we may be able to return to the rightful worship of God in the Sacraments. Thank you and may God bless you and your families.

### **MASS INTENTIONS**

Mass is still being offered everyday - just not publicly. There are many daily and weekend Mass intentions open and available for you to have offered for your loved ones. Email or call the parish. Your message will be returned and we will arrange for your intentions to be offered.

May the blessing of Almighty God + descend upon you and remain with you forever.

## **HOLY WEEK**

As we know, we will not be celebrating the Holy Week liturgies together this year. While we are all in pain that our Holy Week 2020 needs to be a virtual one, we do have a Pastoral Letter from Bishop Barres, *The Great Week: A Pilgrimage with the Lord in Holy Week* which can help strengthen, lift and inspire our virtual Holy Week celebrations.

This Pastoral Letter is a user-friendly, easily understandable synthesis of Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum, its liturgical theology, spirituality and history, designed to show the relationship between the Sacred Liturgies of Holy Week and Catholic Evangelization. The Pastoral Letter is available on our diocesan website DRVC.org and in the March 2020 *Long Island Catholic* magazine that many of you received at home. I encourage everyone to participate in all the Holy Week liturgies virtually through the Catholic Faith Network (see: [catholicfaithnetwork.org](http://catholicfaithnetwork.org) for details).

## **SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

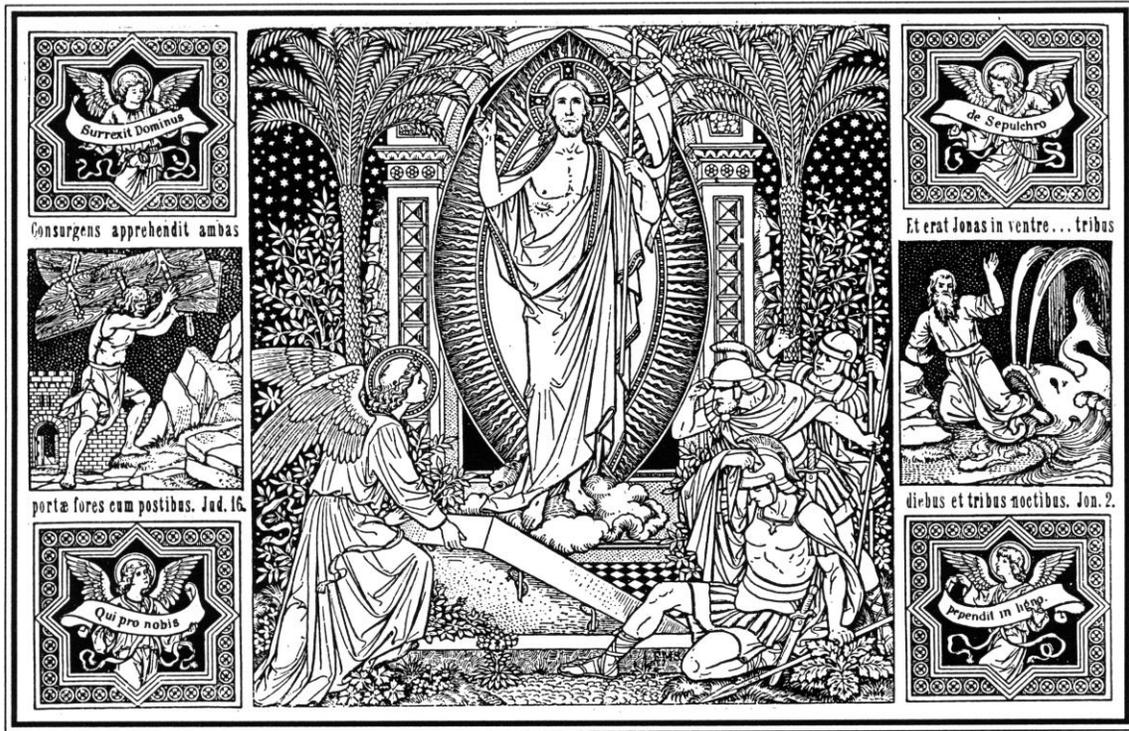
Taken from *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Saint Alphonsus Liguori. Published by Tan Books.

## **PRAYER TO END THE PANDEMIC**

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas, we fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness. For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust. In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy. Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.



Today, Lord, through Your only-begotten Son, the conqueror of death, You re-open the way to heaven for us. May Your grace inspire rightful desires in us and help us also in their fulfillment.

A Blessed Easter to you and your families.

May God bless you all,

Father Sikorski

