

From the desk of.....

Fr Laible

March 28, 2020

Dear Logan County Catholic Community:

Earlier this week, as I began to contemplate the Gospel reading for the Fifth Sunday of Lent, I came across the below reflection, written by a spiritual author who provides for us a very appropriate message as we deal with the pandemic, COVID-19, that has afflicted much of our world.

“When does hope die? When do we come to a situation where we can no longer imagine any future good? When do we reach a place when we look forward and all we can see is despair? Perhaps now as we are engulfed in a pandemic, COVID-19? For the followers of Jesus, the answer to these profound questions is “never.” Never do we believe that hope and goodness will be conquered by evil. Never do we believe that we come to the point where we can no longer look forward with confidence. Never will hope die.

Now these are daring statements, especially now, statements that many would not accept. But we who believe accept them because we believe in God’s power. We believe that God is in charge of the world, and God will not let the world fall apart. We believe that God is in charge of our lives, and God will not abandon us. We believe that God is opposed to the evil that surrounds us, and God has promised us an ultimate victory. For those who believe in Christ, there never comes a point where hope dies, because we believe the power of God is stronger than any other power.

This does not mean that we are preserved from every evil, for the power of God is not yet complete. It waits for the day for Christ’s victory and return. Evil can still touch us and those we love. But even as we face loss, sickness, the ravages of COVID-19, rejection and death, we hold on to the hope that God’s power is still active, and God’s power will preserve us.

Martha, in today’s gospel, believed in Jesus’ power. She believed that he was a great healer. She believed that had Jesus come, he could have saved her brother. *“Lord,” she said, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”* But he did die, and he was now in the tomb. And so for Martha, hope was gone. There was no way that she could imagine her brother alive again. Jesus confronts her understanding and asserts, *“I am the resurrection and the life.”* To show that power Jesus calls forth Lazarus from the tomb. So we, too, if we believe in God’s power, can always hold our hearts open to God’s power in our lives”.

Throughout the week I have witnessed countless examples of people from all walks of life living out the hope that Jesus brings to us. Signs appearing in the windows of neighborhoods around the county with message of hope – “stay strong,” “we will be together again.” Volunteers at food pantries in our local communities, along with much needed donations of basic staples of soup, peanut butter, canned fruits, vegetables, fresh fruit and other items, are providing an important service to our friends and neighbors who are unemployed due to COVID-19.

Our parishioners are reaching out to fellow members of our parishes, especially to the senior citizens of our community, through e-mails, Facebook, phone calls, text messages and especially through prayers, daily live streamed Mass, the Rosary, offering words of encouragement, love and support.

Many of our parishioners recognize that our Logan County Parishes cannot survive very long without the financial support received each week when we gather for Mass. Now that Masses have been suspended, weekly contributions are arriving at the Parish Office in Lincoln via the mail, others have stopped by the parish office and placed their contributions in the mail slot by the front door of the Parish Office, and others use or have signed up for on-line giving at www.logancountycatholic.org

Your continued prayers, financial support to your parish and donations for the food pantry allow our Logan County Catholic Community to continue the vital mission of proclaiming the hope of the Lord Jesus during these difficult days for our country and our world.

Please be assured that Fr Fulgens and I, along with the Parish Staff, continue to work daily to bring the hope and love of the Lord Jesus to our Logan County Catholic Community.

Given the constraints of our “shelter in place” directive by the Governor of Illinois, our parish educational and religious education programs have either ceased or moved to an e-learning platform. Along with our public school educators, the faculty and staff of Carroll School in Lincoln are working daily to provide on going education to the children, teens and young adults of our communities.

Essential services continue throughout our communities and we all owe a great deal of gratitude to those who are working daily to keep our country supplied with the items we need for our daily living. Especially grateful are we to individuals who work in the medical profession, for folks who provide for the daily needs of our most vulnerable citizens in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, the homebound, and group homes, as well First Responders, the National Guard and Military.

Please join me daily in praying for the sick and suffering, for families and friends who mourn the loss of loved ones, especially for anyone who has died due to the pandemic or other diseases, for the unemployed, and for all who are in need. Together, we pray, through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, for healing, strength, hope and a speedy end to this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Fr Laible