

Message from Our Pastor

May 19, 2020

My Dear Friends:

It has now been two months, and counting, since our Church has been closed and all of our lives have been changed since the Coronavirus affected our nation and our world. This has been a challenging time and difficult for all of us. In addition to these many challenges: health, finances, social distancing, loneliness and many others, it is still hard for me to believe that we can't celebrate Mass in our Churches; at least not here in New York. And, as a reminder, this is not a Church or a federal ruling, but this mandate comes from New York State and our Governor, Andrew Cuomo. You may appreciate reading two very balanced articles by Nancy Noonan (The Wall Street Journal, 5-9-20) and Rich Lowry (New York Post, 5-16-20).

One of the many reasons why I am a priest, and why our Catholic faith inspires me, is because the bible is filled with true stories of how people suffered at no fault of their own. They persevered and thrived in time, and with faith, in Jesus. The first story that comes to mind is the Acts of the Apostles. The Apostles would be hunted down and persecuted **just because** of their faith in Jesus. In all probability, the Apostles had no chance! Nevertheless, odds, statistics or probability didn't matter to the Apostles because they had something greater...they had **true faith** in Jesus Christ! True faith doesn't come only in what we say. True faith comes in truly trusting in Jesus Christ. This is why we come to Church. This is why we believe. This is why we are Catholic! The Governor, unfortunately, can control when we are allowed to reopen the Church, but he has no control over our faith in Jesus Christ. Neither did those who were persecuting the Apostles. Those in authority always seem to think they are in control, but God is the one in control. Always! As the Apostles persevered and helped build the strongest community of believers in the history of the world, the Catholic Church, we can and will persevere, and continue to build Christ's Church here on earth. We do need to listen to the experts and use common sense, that's why I invite you to read the two referenced articles above, but we also need to trust in God as we actively express our faith in how we live our lives. The Apostles did not thrive by hiding in the Upper Room, their safety net. They went out amidst potential danger and confidently lived their lives. They persevered because they believed and trusted in Jesus Christ.

In the first letter of St. Peter, he tells us; "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light". Therefore, its value is to have faith: the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

In Sunday's first reading (5-17-20), St. Philip cures unclean spirits, some who were crippled and many who were paralyzed. Philip did not believe in his opposition, but believed in Jesus. In the second reading Peter is preaching hope to people who had no hope. They came to believe because

of the working of Christ through the Apostles. Christ works through us too and this is what we sometimes forget. As the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles at Pentecost, the same Holy Spirit descended on us at our Confirmation. As Christ worked miracles through his Apostles, he can work miracles through us too. As the Apostles overcame their fear and left the upper room, we also need to overcome our fear and slowly help rebuild our community, our state and our country.

We are all looking forward to the day, hopefully sometime this June, when we can congregate again here at Holy Spirit Church and pray for each other, as well as those in need and for our great country.

Please be assured of my prayers and Monsignor Dreasen's prayers for all of you. Monsignor and I celebrate a private Mass, individually, every day for our parish Mass intentions. When there is no parish intention, I pray for the people of Holy Spirit Parish.

If you would like someone added to our website prayer list, please send an email to Monica at mgannon@holyspiritli.org

Our website is: HolySpiritNHP.com (please share this with others).

Stay well, be safe and be assured of my prayers,

Fr. Grieco

Protect us, Lord, as we stay awake; watch over us as we sleep, that awake,
we may keep watch with Christ, and asleep, rest in his peace.
(antiphon from night prayer of the liturgy of the hours).

AS A REMINDER!

I mentioned a few weeks ago why I need to keep our Church locked until we are permitted to open the Church for public Mass. If our Church is left open on a daily basis for people to come in freely, we have no way to police the traffic or activity. Additionally, it would be too costly to constantly keep the Church clean and sterilized all day long. This would be more dangerous than having Mass on a Sunday or during the week. When we are allowed to have Mass on Sunday, we will have a plan and have control over how many people are here, and if they are respecting the necessary guidelines. Personally, it is my opinion that all Churches and businesses should be allowed to open now! Give us the responsibility to adhere to the guidelines and protect our parishioners and/or customers. If we can do this, and I believe we can, we stay open. If we, or any Church or business, is unable to adhere to reasonable guidelines, then penalize them, but not everyone. Again, it is my opinion that we, the government, the Church, businesses and all of us, need to use good common sense and do our best to stay safe and get on with our lives. If some disagree, they have the freedom to stay at home. This way, everyone is happy!