

27 March 2020

First, a few things you should know.

- The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is looking for non-perishable food and toiletries to provide assistance to the less fortunate in our community. Many people in secure situations may not realize individuals are falling through the cracks of our social safety net (especially as Covid 19 has led to the closure of many institutions which had helped them) and it is our duty as Catholics to catch them before they hit the ground. I have been told the number of food donations the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has received lately has declined steeply. We will continue to provide assistance as long as there is something to provide. Please drop your donations in the barrel at the doorway next to the Adoration Chapel in the Church or if it is cash put it in an envelope and deliver it through the mail slot in the Parish Office door.
- A reminder the Diocesan-wide Day of Reconciliation, where Confessions were to be heard in all Churches from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM, to be held on Saturday, March 28 has been cancelled. At Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish, Confessions will be heard from 3:30 until 4:00 PM each Saturday until further notice (social distancing rules still apply).
- The Daffodil Tea, scheduled to take place at Holy Rosary Parish Hall on Wednesday, April 29, has been postponed. It is hoped the event will take place in June but the decision will be made based on the unfolding situation. Updates about the event will be posted on this website.
- K of C Council #2319 want to make sure all their members know all Council Meetings have been cancelled until further notice. The State Convention has also been cancelled.

Shortly after Bishop Bergie assigned me to Holy Rosary Parish, I received my letter of appointment which said as of August 1, 2018, I was the new pastor. Although no one asked to see it when I arrived here, they could have. Somewhere, among all the stuff in my office, I have the letter because they are my credentials. The letter states I have the competence and authority to act in the capacity of pastor.

In today's Gospel, Christ's secret return to Jerusalem prompts people to talk about his identity. Since he is walking about openly and the Jewish officials are known to be looking for an opportunity to kill him, many individuals wonder if their leaders are convinced Jesus is the Messiah. The title "Messiah" was a loaded term at that time. Some people were hoping a social-political leader would arise to drive out the Roman occupiers of Israel as the Maccabees had done to the Greeks two hundred years earlier. Others were hoping for a spiritual leader who would lead a spiritual renewal which would bring the Jewish people closer to God. Many Jews likely hoped such a person, anointed by God or a "Messiah", would accomplish both goals. The main problem with Christ being recognized as a Messiah was his credentials. He came from Nazareth (although born in Bethlehem). According to tradition, no one would know from where the Messiah came.

While Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth, he came from neither place. He came from his father: God. This claim further infuriated the Jewish leaders. Since he did not have the proper credentials (in their eyes) Christ was an imposter and eventually arrested, tried and executed. It was only after the Resurrection that it became clear he did in fact have the proper credentials.

So what are our credentials as Christ's disciples (and all others who believe in God) as we deal with the Covid 19 situation. As I pointed out in a previous post, we need to be people of faith. We must believe God walks beside us as we journey through this pandemic. We need to be people of hope. We must fix in our minds and hearts that, although many people will suffer and die and the economic damage caused by Covid 19 will be considerable, we will get through this crisis together. Finally, we must be people of love expressed in concrete action. Our credentials will be shown by how we act when standing in a long line at Walmart. They will be tested when someone in our family or a friend tests positive for the virus and we find a way to care for them. They will be demonstrated when we stop in the middle of a busy day to listen to someone who is scared about the future. Faith is not about noble ideas. Hope is not about wishful thinking. Love is not about being nice. These things are about remembering what is important when everything is falling apart and responding to the real needs of real people living in the real world.

Others may scoff at our credentials as the crowd scoffed at those of Jesus. But, we need to remember that in the long run, credentials prove themselves.