

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

04 June 2020

First, a few things you should know:

- As you probably know, the Province of Ontario has extended its lockdown until June 30. This means Churches will not likely be open before that date. However, plans are being drawn up by the Bishops of Ontario for when we will be able to resume services. As of this moment, I have no details about these plans but will pass on any information I receive from the Diocese as soon as it arrives. I know we will be looking for volunteers to help clean Holy Rosary Church before it opens and between services after it does. We will likely need volunteers for other tasks as well. Please consider volunteering when we need you.
- Once again, a thank you to those who are continuing to financially support the Parish by dropping off your Offertory Envelopes through the Parish Office Door Mail Slot, using Direct Deposit or the Donations tab on the Parish website. Thanks also for those who are continuing to provide non-perishable food and toiletries as well as cash to our St. Vincent De Paul Society so they can help the needy in our community. Thank-you also to the volunteers who are doing this important work every Thursday in the Parish Hall.
- Many people have called the Rectory to see how we are all doing here. We appreciate the concern. We are all doing fine but can't wait to get back to normal (whatever that will be).
- The Knights of Columbus will be holding a virtual Fraternal Night later this month for any men in the Parish who wish to join their organization. More details will follow.

I admire people who can do something really well. It doesn't matter whether what they do is brain surgery, cooking pasta or changing the oil in a car, I appreciate the ability to master a skill. This talent often results from proper training, a great deal of experience and the discipline to demand the best from yourself. If you are really good at something, you don't need anyone to tell you about it: the work speaks for itself.

In today's Gospel, a scribe complements Jesus on his answer to the question about which commandment is first of all and he reciprocates. The Jewish Law consisted of 613 separate rules, some of which were broad principles and others particular regulations. Bible scholars tell us the question of which commandment was the greatest was often debated among Rabbis as a way of demonstrating their religious knowledge and eloquence. However, it was also important because the greatest commandment would be the core around which all the other rules in the Law would be fit. Christ's response to the question showed he understood how everything demanded by the Law could be reduced to two categories: love of God and love of neighbour. He also highlighted the connection between these two categories because love of God is demonstrated by loving that which God created (one's neighbour). As someone who had studied the Jewish Law and its many interpretations, the scribe's response indicates he appreciated the skill with which Jesus replied to the question. Christ, perceiving the scribe's ability to recognize religious truth when presented to him, returned the complement. While scribes (along with the Pharisees) are often portrayed as hostile to Jesus, this story reveals the ability to do something well can be recognized by anyone.

Catholics and other people of faith are called to use whatever talents they have to serve God and their neighbour. Believers recognize their skills are gifts from God and the way to show gratitude is to use them to the best of their ability for the common good. Sadly, many people in our society too easily accept mediocrity from others and themselves. They don't expect the items they purchase or service they receive to be excellent. They often put the minimum effort required into doing something. They ask, if everyone else is coasting, why do I need to push myself? It is only when the rewards are great that they might put forward a superior effort. The idea of doing something well for its own sake or as a statement about themselves seems to be disappearing.

During this Covid-19 crisis, Catholics and other people of faith have many opportunities to use their abilities. Some of these people will do it in obvious ways: medical professionals who work long hours in hospitals keeping people alive; truck drivers who take overtime to make sure vital supplies arrive where they are needed or clerks who keep store shelves stocked. Yet, there are important but less obvious ways other skills can be used. In a world of non-stop talking, the ability to listen, especially to those who are afraid or depressed, is essential. When many people are housebound, cutting an elderly neighbour's grass can mean a lot to him or her. Since many students are now learning on-line, being there to help them cope with their homework makes a big difference. While it is important for believers to utilize their talents, they also must consider the manner in which they are doing so. Since human talents come from God, whenever a person of faith uses them, he or she makes a faith statement. When a person of faith uses whatever talent they have to the fullest, that individual serves both their God and neighbour.

For believers, there will always be people better than them at a particular skill. Their efforts will often not result in perfection or success. But, they also know what God really wants: to see his gifts used well.