

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

20 April 2020

First, a few things you should know:

- Our second Sunday Video Service has been completed. The link to it is available on the Parish [Website](#) and [Facebook](#) Page. My intention is to start recording them earlier in the week so they can be posted before the Sunday for which they have been produced. Our technical quality is also improving as we learn how to do it better.
- For those of you who have requested Mass Intentions, please be assured Father Kessete and myself each have been celebrating a private Mass every day during the Covid-19 pandemic at which the promised intention is offered.
- Thank you to everyone who continues to donate non-perishable food and toiletries to help the less fortunate in our community. Our St. Vincent De Paul Society serves people on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If possible, it would be particularly helpful if donations were dropped off at the Parish Office on Mondays and Wednesdays (although all donations at any time are appreciated).

Isn't it interesting how two people can look at the same object and see them very differently? A geologist looks at a mountain and sees the product of certain natural forces. He can see the presence of certain kinds of rocks and minerals. He can see and measure certain material properties like height, slope and chemical composition. An artist looks at the same mountain and sees the beauty of its size and shape. He can see different colour patterns as the light reflects off the rock, snow and trees. He can see the effects of light and shadow which result from the contours of the mountain slopes. This difference in perception stems from the divergent frameworks used by the geologist and artist to interpret what they see.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells Nicodemus "what is born of the flesh is flesh and what is born of the Spirit is spirit" and so he should not be astonished when Jesus tells him he must be born from above (or in some translations "born again"). Although Nicodemus is a leader of the Jews, his framework is rooted in earthly existence. When Christ states he must be born from above, Nicodemus thinks he is talking about physical birth (re-entering his mother's womb). Jesus then corrects him by talking about being born of "water and Spirit" (Baptism). When one is baptized, one becomes a new person with a different framework with which to understand one's world. One's experiences with the material world remain the same: hunger, exhaustion, coldness and pain do not go away. Yet, the meaning derived from them changes. These sufferings are not unpleasant experiences but connections to the Passion and Death of Jesus. Our modern society has a problem dealing with suffering: it has no value and must be eliminated at all costs. Yet for Christians, suffering is not meaningless which makes it easier to accept and even embrace. Their different framework means while they live in the world of the flesh (like Nicodemus) but are not controlled by it because they are able to interpret what they see through the world of the Spirit.

For Catholics and other people of faith, the spiritual dimension of suffering helps them cope with difficult times. During this Covid-19 pandemic, many people are asking questions like why is this happening and when will this be over? Some are having difficulty with the economic uncertainty and social isolation. Hopefully, this does not lead to a breakdown of social order. At times like this, people have to dig a little deeper into their reserves of patience and discipline. With their different framework Catholics and other people of faith can provide example and support for those who are struggling. If suffering has meaning, it can be seen as less frightening. The response to uncertainty is trust that God will see us through. This generation is not the first to be afflicted by the plague (think of the Black Death in 1348-1351) and will not be the last. Our spiritual ancestors survived without the advantages of modern medicine. So why can't we?

Our spiritual framework doesn't make the Covid-19 pandemic go away or change the number of infections and deaths. But, it does change how we interpret them.