

Statement for Website  
From Fr. Michael Basque

15 April 2020

First, a few things you should know:

- Bishop Bergie has invited Robert Greene, a Seminarian, to live at Holy Rosary Parish for a while. Robert will be entering his final year of formation at St. Peter's Seminary in London in September and will be ordained a Priest in 2021. We look forward to having Robert as part of our Pastoral Ministry team this summer. Welcome Robert!

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Almost every day since I was ordained a Priest, I have celebrated Mass. While sometimes I was focused, other times I was distracted. There were occasions when I was joyful and other times when I was grumpy. At times I was spiritual while on other occasions I was mechanical. Yet, in each case certain things were constant. I offered to God where I was that day (good or bad). I read the Scripture texts and saw how they related to my situation. After I consecrated the bread and wine, I recognized how Christ was present to me. By the end of Mass, I knew I was somehow different from when I started.

In today's Gospel, the risen Jesus encounters two disciples on the road to Emmaus. When Christ asked Cleopas and his companion what they were talking about on the road, the disciples did not hide their confusion and disillusionment. They saw Jesus as a prophet, mighty in word and deed, who would redeem Israel. Their hopes were dashed when the chief priests and elders handed him over to be crucified. Now some women who had been to his tomb came back with the message he was alive. What was going on here? Jesus responded by relating Scripture texts to their situation. From the time of Moses and the prophets, there were indications the Messiah would have to suffer to fulfill his mission and enter into his glory. At the table, it was after Christ took bread, blessed and broke it (as he did at the Last Supper) that the disciples recognized his presence among them. Although it was now late, Cleopas and his companion recognized their situation had changed completely from earlier in the day. They had left Jerusalem full of confusion and disillusionment but now returned there filled with clarity and hope. Clearly, the experience of these disciples highlights why the key elements of the Mass are so important.

During this Covid 19 pandemic, most Catholics are unable to go to Mass. I have heard many people describe how this situation has left a big hole in their spiritual lives. Catholics can always pray the Rosary or undertake some other devotion. They can read the Bible each day or some good spiritual writer. They can even the Mass prayers and Scripture texts each day. Yet, something is missing. It is for this reason I am pleased Bishop Bergie and a number of Priests are celebrating Mass and live-streaming it on the internet. While it is not the same as being there, it does allow people to present themselves to God as they are that day (happy or grumpy), hear the Scripture texts and try to relate them to their lives and be in the spiritual (if not physical) presence of Christ at the consecration. Hopefully when the Mass is over, they see things a little differently: God walks beside them; they are united with others around the world and they will get through this situation.

Hopefully, after the Covid 19 pandemic becomes part of history, Catholics will remember how the Mass can help them make sense out of life regardless of the circumstances.