

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

03 April 2020

First, a few things you should know:

- Until further notice, anyone who desires to celebrate the Sacrament of Confession is asked to call the office to make an appointment between 3:30 and 4:00 PM on Saturday afternoons and I will hear their Confession in the Caritas Room observing proper social distancing (six feet between persons).
- The Elvis Night scheduled for May 2 in the Parish Hall has been postponed until further notice. When a new date is set, it will be advertised on this website.
- No decision has been made about whether the St. Anthony of Padua and Feast of the Assumption celebrations will be held this year.

Doing the right thing rarely makes you popular. In a world where many people will lie to get ahead, cheat if they can get away with it and steal from others to better themselves there seems to be little incentive to tell the truth, play by the rules and respect the property of another person. Yet, each of us knows lying, cheating and stealing is wrong. We also have likely been the victim of someone who has wronged us in these ways. Perhaps for this reason, we ask why God can allow people to get away with doing what is clearly wrong.

In today's Gospel, Jeremiah expresses his frustration at God for the consequences he has experienced from trying to do the right thing. God commissioned Jeremiah to tell the political and religious leaders of Jerusalem, as well as the people, they must repent from their sins and trust in God. Since at the time, the Babylonians were attacking Judah and besieging its capital, this was not a message those people wanted to hear. For his trouble, the prophet was accused of being a traitor, publicly ridiculed by those in authority, thrown into a cistern to drown (although he was rescued) and ostracized by everyone. You can understand his anger at God for allowing this to happen to him when he had been faithful to God. It foreshadows a comment attributed to St. Teresa of Avila: "God, since you treat your friends this way, I can understand why you have so few of them". Yet, Jeremiah knows God is on his side. He will be vindicated and those who are plotting against him will regret it. In another passage, he describes how the truth burns within him. Despite his desire to stop proclaiming God's message, he can't do so. The need to do the right thing overpowers him.

During this Covid 19 pandemic, we have all experienced personally or heard stories of people not doing the right thing. They tear down signs telling them not to use a park because they ignore rules they don't like. They gather in groups and don't practice social distancing. They complain loudly that an item they want is sold out or about the length of the line at the checkout at the grocery store. We have also heard stories of people buying scarce products in bulk and selling them at inflated prices. We have heard stories of people stealing toilet paper out of public restrooms. Why does God allow this?

Yet, each of us has to live with ourselves. We know the difference between right and wrong. We know the key to reducing the number of cases and death from Covid 19 is to do the right thing for the common good. After all, the life which may be saved by doing so could be ours or that of a loved one. Although we know a lot of people are not doing the right thing, that

fact does not permit us to do the same. All of this frustrates many people, including Catholics and other people of faith. We need to vent. So, go ahead, be like Jeremiah: yell at God. It might lower your blood pressure and stress level. Don't worry, God can handle it.

Doing the right thing has rarely made one popular. But, it is the right thing. What else really matters.