

Statement for Website  
From Fr. Michael Basque

05 April 2020

First, a few things you should know.

- I am grateful to all those who are continuing to support the parish financially and drop off food for the St. Vincent DePaul Society. I realize some of you cannot do so for financial reasons. I understand. Make sure you can look after yourself and loved ones.
- On a personal note, everyone in the Rectory is healthy and doing fine. I appreciate how much our staff is getting accomplished by working at home and coming in when they can.

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You may remember there was a time before Covid 19. There were so many things to do: work, shopping at the Mall, watching sports on TV, taking the kids to hockey practice or dance lessons and family events. How did we fit it all in? Today, many people I know are complaining about having too much time on their hands. Some are trying to work from home but are only accomplishing a fraction of what really needs to get done. For those in self-isolation there is a limit to how much news coverage you can watch about the pandemic. What is the point of watching a sporting event on TV from years ago when you already know the outcome? After doing your spring cleaning, chores around the house, rearranging your bookshelves, going through your closet throwing out clothes you don't wear anymore, what is left to do? Perhaps our hyper-stimulated lives needed a break to force us to stop and think about what is really going on in them and where they are going in the future.

In today's Gospel, Jesus leaves the Last Supper and goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Christ had been busy the previous few days. He arrived in Jerusalem and was greeted by crowds shouting "Hosanna". He had several conflicts with the Jewish authorities in the Temple before crowds of people. He had celebrated a Passover Meal at which he instituted the Eucharist. In addition, Christ likely knew a lot was going to happen to him in the near future. He predicted his disciples would abandon him (he was right). He predicted Peter would deny him three times (he was right). His comment to Judas when the apostle arrived in the Garden shows he knew who would betray him. Yet, in the midst of all this he had the time to pray and did so.

Since he was human, Christ was not likely looking forward to all these things which were about to happen to him. His journey would end in death; and not a pleasant one. His prayer was authentic "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me". Maybe he needed to get that off his chest. Was there not another way he could accomplish his mission on earth? Yet, he realizes the answer: "yet, not what I want but what you want". Perhaps, this act of seizing the opportunity to pray when he had it, after all the soldiers were on their way, enabled him to take stock of his situation, accept it and gather the strength to carry on. When Judas came, Peter denied, the elders condemned, Pilate washed his hands, the soldiers mocked and the crowds jeered, Jesus kept on going. Jesus understood time was a valuable resource and used it wisely.

During this Covid 19 pandemic we are getting the chance to think about time. We do know how we have used it in the past. We don't know how much of it we have left in the future. Since it is a valuable resource, we shouldn't squander it. We can focus our attention on the fact we are bored and fill it with trivial activities. Another possibility is to take stock of what is really important to us and use it wisely. Time spent building relationships with loved ones really

listening to them, is never wasted. Spending time in prayer, asking God to guide you on your life's journey, especially when it has been turned upside-down, can be reassuring. Using time to reflect on the kind of person you want to be five or ten years from now and thinking about what you have to change to get there, can be life-giving. Catholics and other people of faith know time is a gift from God for which we will be held accountable. We need to be good stewards of it.

Hopefully, in a few months things will get back to normal. We will once again be busy with all those activities which fill our time. Will we be any wiser and better stewards of it after Covid 19? I hope so.