

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

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First, a few things you should know:

- Just a reminder that all the major liturgies for the Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil) which will be celebrated by Bishop Bergie will be live-streamed from the Cathedral. Check the Diocesan website (www.saintcd.com) for the link.

A few years ago, I was having trouble writing my Sunday Sermon. Despite all the work I had put into it, as I walked away from the pulpit after having delivered it, I was convinced it was a stinker. As I stood at the back of the Church after Mass, someone came up and thanked me for my wonderful message. Before I could say anything, he repeated exactly what I said and why it meant so much to him that Sunday. The experience taught me a valuable lesson. You can never know the effect of something you say or do will have on another person.

In today's First Reading, Isaiah's Suffering Servant says he has laboured in vain and has spent his strength for nothing and vanity. Yet, in the very next line he remembers his cause is with the Lord and his reward is with God. When early Christians were trying to convince Jews that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, they had a problem. There was nowhere in the Hebrew Scriptures which indicated the Messiah would suffer and die at the hands of his enemies. Many believed the coming Messiah would be a powerful figure who would set things right, politically, socially and spiritually. Jesus appeared to be a total failure as a Messiah. He was executed by the Romans, his disciples were scattered and his message was not accepted by many people. He would be forgotten in a few years. Those early Christians saw in the Suffering Servant found in Isaiah a figure who foreshadowed Jesus. While it might first appear the Servant and Jesus had accomplished nothing, what they did was in accordance with God's plan, and so the effects of their actions would be recognized by others in the future. Two thousand years later, we know Christ was raised from the dead, his disciples number a billion people across the world and his message has become known universally.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, we have repeatedly been told our actions can affect others. If we wash our hands frequently, practice social distancing, cough or sneeze into our sleeve and stay home we can stop the spread of the virus and protect our loved ones. We have also been told when we look in on our elderly neighbours, listen to credible sources of news about the situation rather than rumour and gossip and try to be patient when standing in line, we can reduce the level of stress and anxiety within our society. Yet, it is often hard to know the good which comes from such actions. If someone doesn't get Covid 19, is it because you practiced social distancing? People don't often thank you for waiting patiently in line. As the number of cases of infections and death keeps rising, it may be difficult to perceive whether we are having any good effect on things.

Catholics and other people of faith understand it takes time for the consequences of an action to become visible. God's message isn't always readily accepted. Paul was driven out of town for preaching the Gospel more than once. The number of people in the Church remained small for centuries. Internal divisions between Christians were often bitter and took a long time to heal. Yet, as the Suffering Servant remembered, our cause is with the Lord and our reward comes from God. Despite all these setbacks, the Church kept growing because God walked

beside it. Today, God does the same thing. As we cope with Covid 19, we may not see the effects of what we do; but God does. As long as we remember this is true and that we are not alone, we can move forward.

The next time you don't see the positive effect of some good deed you have done, God will likely send someone to correct you.