

Statement for Website  
28 March 2020

First, a few things you should know.

- Sandra Romano (our Parish secretary/bookkeeper) has completed work on the donations portion of the Parish website and we have received our first donation through it (which proves that it works).
- Tomorrow, Bishop Bergie will be celebrating the 11:30 Mass at the Cathedral which will be live-streamed across the Diocese (go to the Diocesan website for details about how you can watch it).
- Yesterday, the Pope gave a special blessing to the world to help it deal with the Covid 19 virus.

Certain places prompt individuals to think about people from those locations in a particular way. People from cities like New York or Toronto are thought to be more worldly than those from small towns. Individuals from countries like Italy or France are thought to know more about fine dining or wine than those from Norway or Denmark. People from Germany or Japan are thought to be smarter or more technologically adept than those from Canada or Poland. Yet, I know individuals from Toronto who know little about the world, some from France who can't cook and Germans who have trouble with their computers. The darker side of this tendency is that certain people get stigmatized because of where they are from despite being underserving of that response.

In today's Gospel, some people dismiss the possibility that Jesus is the Messiah because they think he is from Nazareth. The Scriptures indicated the Messiah would descend from David who was born in Bethlehem and the crowds are unaware this was where Jesus was actually born (not Nazareth). The Jewish leaders attack the Temple police, who had not arrested Christ because no one had ever spoken like him before, as being deceived. They ridicule Nicodemus who reminds them the Law requires a person to be heard before judgment is passed on him or her, by saying he must also be from Galilee. While they were offended by Christ's teachings and actions around the Temple, they likely further resented the fact he came not from a priestly family in Jerusalem but a non-descript town in Galilee. The stigma of where Jesus had grown up seemed to intensify their hatred for him. This makes them unable to see the good that he was doing for others and the truth he was revealing.

This kind of blindness has occurred during the Covid 19 pandemic. Everyone knows the first infections of the virus occurred in Wuhan, China. Since that time, some people have called it the "China Virus", as if it had a nationality or passport. Sadly, many oriental people (some of whom were not even Chinese) were shunned by others and accused of spreading the infection. By now the virus has spread around the world by people from many nations. However, these comments continue as if only certain people were the cause of the problems we face. This attitude blinds people to the fact we need to work together to stop the virus. Medical researchers from many nations need to cooperate in coming up with a vaccine. Officials from various governments need to share best practices to try to treat its victims. They will also have to coordinate their efforts to deal with the economic fallout which is sure to come. Finally, individuals need to see each other not as nationalities but human beings fighting against a common enemy.

Catholics and other people of faith can take the lead in doing so. Christians believe all humans were created in the image and likeness of God. Everyone was redeemed by the death of

Jesus on the cross. As was shown in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, each national, religious, ethnic, linguistic and gender group is our neighbour. We are not permitted the luxury of hating or even stigmatizing anyone.

Members of the human race have more in common than things which separate them. At times like this, we cannot afford to forget it. God help us if we do.