

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

16 April 2020

First, a few things you should know:

- Robert Greene, our Seminarian has arrived at Holy Rosary. Welcome Robert.
- Once again, I would like to thank those Parishioners who are continuing to support the Parish financially through Direct Deposit or through our website or by delivering their envelopes through the slot in the Parish Office door . Thank you also to those who are dropping off donations of food or cash for the St. Vincent DePaul Society at the Parish Office so they can help the needy. Thanks to your support, the St. Vincent DePaul Society is able to continue its important work during these difficult times.

In the summer before I entered St. Augustine's Seminary to begin my formation for the Priesthood, a Priest I knew told me I should take as many Scripture courses as possible during my studies. I knew a good knowledge of the Bible was necessary for me to understand many of the Church's teachings. I also knew a good knowledge of the Bible would be necessary in order for me to preach well, celebrate the Sacraments and lead pastoral programs like the RCIA or Bible Study. Yet, I wanted to study as much Moral Theology as possible so I could navigate the complex ethical issues which people face these days. I also wanted to study Church History so I could place our present challenges into some kind of perspective. After a few years working in a Parish, I began to see the wisdom of that Priest's advice. While I understood the practical side of having a good knowledge of Scripture during the Seminary, I underestimated its spiritual value. I began to see how the stories in the Bible described and explored the experiences I was having on a daily basis and kept me connected to God.

In today's Gospel, the risen Christ opens the minds of his disciples to understand the Scriptures. Like most Jews, the disciples likely had a basic understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures. During his ministry, Jesus quoted and referred to many texts from them and tried to help people understand their meaning in a new way. The events of the preceding days (the Last Supper, the Passion, Death and now Resurrection of Jesus) had likely confused the disciples. The news from Cleopas and his companion provided them with more information but not necessarily a clearer grasp of the meaning of these events. With the appearance of the risen Christ, their fears and doubts increased. His eating a piece of fish to prove he was not a ghost helped a little. But, when he taught them everything they experienced was necessary to fulfill Scripture and then opened their minds to understand how, Jesus gave the disciples the means to remain connected to him now and insure others would be connected to him in the future.

Catholics and other people of faith understand the importance of sacred texts. Stories are what connect us as human beings. Many of the stories found in sacred texts teach us something profound about the human condition. Their message transcends the boundaries of time and space. This means stories recorded almost two thousand years ago in the Christian Scriptures can speak to us today in the middle of this Covid 19 pandemic. There are people who are in self-

isolation and completely dependent on others to get their groceries, medications and walk their dog. They don't like feeling helpless. They are likely able to relate to the paralytic in Mark's Gospel who relies on four friends to carry him to the house where Christ is staying and when the crowd is too large, climb on the roof, dig through the tiles and lower him to the feet of Jesus. Other people who see all the suffering and death caused by the virus want to shake their fist at God and yell "Why are you allowing this to happen?" They can probably relate to how after Job loses all his property and children and is covered with sores confronted God about the reason for his predicament. Still others, whose faith in God was strong at the start of this crisis, have seen it crumble after a loved one became seriously ill with Covid 19. They can likely relate to the story in Mark's Gospel where a father cries out "I believe, help my unbelief". Each of these stories reminds us the experiences we face are no different from those which others have encountered throughout history. They keep us connected to others and God.

The Bible is a tool which can help us battle Covid 19. It may not kill off the virus or prevent its spread, but it can eliminate the sense of disconnection from God and others which can be just as dangerous.