

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

24 April 2020

First, a few things you should know:

- Robert Greene, one of our Diocesan Seminarians, has been assigned to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish until the end of the summer (Labour Day weekend). He is fitting in really well at the Parish and we are happy to have him around. Once things open up, you will have a chance to get to know him. Also, we are all doing well in the Rectory.
- In response to a request by the government, Bishop Bergie has asked the bells of all Churches in the Diocese be rung at 7:00 PM tonight to remember those killed in the mass shooting in Nova Scotia last weekend. We ask you to pray for the repose of the souls of all those who perished, that those injured be healed, that the family and friends of those killed or injured during the shooting be supported as well as the people of Nova Scotia who have been stunned by this senseless tragedy. You are also asked to wear red today as a sign of remembrance.
- Our third Sunday Video Service has been completed and can be accessed through the Parish Facebook page. I hope to continue producing these videos until Weekend Masses resume. Thank you to those involved in its production.
- Thank you also to those who continue financially supporting the Parish by delivering their offertory envelopes through the Parish Office door mail slot, or using Direct Deposit or making donations through the Parish website. We will be posting a Parish Financial Statement for the first three months of the year soon. I would also like to thank those who have provided the St. Vincent DePaul Society with the funds and food which has allowed them to continue their operations to help the needy of our community during this pandemic. I also want to thank the St. Vincent DePaul Society volunteers who continue to do this important work. It makes me proud to be your Pastor.

How long is a “long time”. For some people waiting for ten minutes in line outside a bank or Walmart is a “long time”. For kids, the eight months between tomorrow and Christmas Day is a “long time”. For adults, the years between now and retirement is a “long time”. Yet, those of us who are older know how quickly time passes. It will be thirty-one years next month since I was ordained a Priest. Where did the time go? Yet for the Church, time is not measured in minutes or months or years but centuries and millennia. When you have been around for two thousand years, your perception of what constitutes a “long time” is a little different than most people.

In today’s Gospel, the Pharisee Gamaliel advises the Jewish Council to respond to the preaching of Christ’s disciples by waiting to see whether their movement will last a “long time”. We know from secular history that Gamaliel was a real person who a famous Rabbi who lived around the time of Jesus. There is also evidence the two revolts against the Romans he talks about actually occurred. Besides the historical information he provides, Gamaliel provides some key insights about the early Church for Jews, Christians and others. If the movement founded by Christ was of human origins, it would eventually expire. After all, the Roman Empire (which lasted one

thousand years) no longer exists and is known only through the history books. Yet, if the movement Jesus established came from God, it would not last a “long time” but for eternity and nothing could stop it. Gamaliel was advising the Council and us to recall God’s timeframe is not the same as ours. What seems to us to be a “long time” might be an instant for God. This means we must develop a different perspective when it comes to understanding the events which happen in our lives.

For Catholics and other people of faith, keeping this different framework in mind can be challenging. Like many other individuals caught up in this Covid-19 pandemic, it is easy to think this crisis has been going on for a “long time”. There are so many things we want to do. I know people who can’t wait for the Garden Centers to re-open so they can purchase supplies and start working on their lawns and plant flowers or vegetables. There are others who are itching to get out on the golf course or the ball diamond to resume their athletic careers. The question is asked repeatedly, “When will this be over?” These frustrations are understandable. Many of these same individuals recognize the wisdom of medical and government experts who warn resuming such activities too quickly could lead to a second wave of infections. Others understand pandemics have occurred throughout history and when placed into perspective the damage caused by this one could have been much worse. With their different framework, Catholics and other people of faith can make an additional contribution to the conversation. As I mentioned in a previous post, none of us knows how this pandemic will turn out. Perhaps, one lesson we can learn from this experience is humility: we have less control over things than we imagine. The same is true with time. We do not know how long this pandemic will last. We do not know how long the social and economic impact will be felt by people. In other words, we can’t control either what or when things happen. Perhaps, the question we should ask ourselves is how are we using this time? A challenging experience can bring out the best or worst in us. Which one will it be?

It is possible to determine whether the Covid-19 pandemic lasted a “long time” by counting the weeks, months or years. Or we could measure it by how much we grew from it.