

Statement for Website
31 March 2020

First, a few things you should know.

- Sandra Romano (our Secretary/Bookkeeper) is archiving all the posts I have put on the Parish website so that people who may have missed one can keep up with information about the situation at Holy Rosary. Since the Church is now locked, those wishing to drop off donations for the St. Vincent DePaul Society (to help the needy in our community) are asked to put them outside the Parish Office door. We will monitor this area over the course of the day and bring inside all donations.

Whenever I arrive at a new parish assignment, I always feel a rush of energy. There are new people to meet, new things to learn and new opportunities to contribute something to the parish. There is a freshness about the situation which gives me energy. As times passes, (regardless of the assignment) things start to become routine, Problems arise which I had not anticipated. Everything becomes a grind and it takes a lot of energy just to keep going. The energy and freshness is gone. One thing I have learned from these experiences is that it often takes something dramatic to jolt me out of my lethargy.

In today's First Reading, the people grumble at Moses about the lack water and miserable food which they encounter daily as they travel across the desert. This grumbling is really directed towards God and highlights their short memories. God had done miracles in Egypt to compel the Pharaoh to let the Israelite slaves leave that country. He had rescued them from being destroyed by the Egyptian army by parting the Red Sea and allowing the Israelites to escape. When there was no water, God supplied it at Meribah. When they had no food God provided them with quails and manna. The routine and hardships caused by their trip across the desert had dissipated the energy and freshness they must have felt at finally being freed from slavery in Egypt. They needed something to jolt them out of their lethargy and God provided it: poisonous serpents which caused the death of many people. After they realized their sin of not trusting in God, they repented and God supplied some relief: the bronze serpent on a pole which when looked upon provided healing. God did not cause the serpents to go away because maybe he realized their presence would prevent the Israelites from becoming too complacent in the future.

When the Covid 19 pandemic started to have a real impact on the lives of people because of self isolation and the shutting down of non-essential businesses, I don't know of anyone who felt energy or freshness. Yet, in the first few days, people adjusted. I know some individuals who liked the fact they now had time to start their spring cleaning or do chores around the house they had been putting off for a while. Others binge watched their favorite programs on TV. After a while, things began to change. They got restless being cooped up in the house. They started going out on trips to the store for non-essential items, visiting friends and gathering in groups despite the warning from public health officials to avoid doing so. Then, they would be jolted out of their complacency. Someone they knew tested positive for the virus or was admitted to the hospital. The TV news reported a dramatic spike in the number of deaths in their province.

The medical experts tell us our present situation is going to continue for a while. The number of cases of infected people and death will likely continue to rise. School closures have been extended. States of emergency will not end as soon as was hoped. They are now talking in terms of months not weeks before things get better. Catholics and all people of faith know the challenges of maintaining the energy and freshness of their spiritual life. Praying can become just saying the words. In Confession, the same sins are repeated time after time. Acts of charity

are seen as a duty. It is so easy to become complacent. As the Israelites discovered, everyone once in a while God jolts us out of our complacency through some harsh experience. Perhaps Covid 19 may be an example of this kind of event.

As people of faith, we have hopefully developed the discipline to recognize when we are becoming complacent in different parts of our life. This discipline will then give us the energy and freshness to serve others at a time when it could be valuable to them and us.