

Pastoral Reflection

August 27, 2020

In the Gospel passage for this coming Sunday, Jesus instructs His disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24). How pertinent His teaching is today to us as faithful Catholics, coping with anxiety and uncertainty in this pandemic and the disruption to nearly every aspect of our daily lives. We earnestly pray for those who are suffering physical illness and those who have died in this pandemic, and for their families.

Jesus showers His grace and mercy upon each of us, to allow us to meet these grave challenges and ‘follow Him.’ We are emboldened and encouraged by Christ’s love to remain hopeful during this crisis, to find joy in family, and to find comfort in simple pleasures like walks on warm summer days and ‘socially-distanced’ activities.

Christ imbued the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity within our hearts at Baptism. These virtues move us to respond to His love: we recommit ourselves in Faith to His message of truth; we earnestly Hope that through prayer and our loving actions He will save the People of God (all people) from this current scourge; and we act in Charity showing Love of God and Love of Neighbor.

Additionally, the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit were poured into our hearts at Baptism and again in the Sacrament of Confirmation, and give us the fortitude, understanding, and wisdom to bear the cross of the pandemic and to take loving actions for our families and our neighbor in need. As the season of fall begins, we pray for the Holy Spirit to guide the many families making difficult decisions related to work and school.

As Jesus’ faithful followers, we fully open our hearts to His loving teaching that every human life is sanctified, and that each person so sanctified deserves to live in dignity. Fifty-seven years ago, seven miles from our beloved parish church at the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., declared, “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’” This year has exposed the urgent need for us as Christians to rededicate and expand our efforts to spread Christ’s message of love and truth to all persons, and help achieve racial equality.

I hope and pray for the health and well-being of your family during these challenging times.

Peace,

Deacon Don