

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT 2020

Dear Friends,

We find ourselves in a strange new land. Public Masses and all other parish activities have been cancelled. Our schools stand empty. Those who can are working from home. Many people find themselves laid off from their jobs. It is a time of uncertainty.

For those of us who are used to the familiar rhythm of Lent, we find ourselves in a new kind of desert or wilderness. With the possibility of no public celebration of the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter we might be tempted to throw our observance of Lent out the window.

However, as people of faith, we are being challenged to embrace this Lent which we have been given. God is in control. Let us remember that the most repeated phrase throughout the Scriptures is "Do not be afraid." God is always with us.

This Sunday's Gospel of the cure of the man born blind provides us with an important perspective. When Jesus encounters the man his disciples ask him: "Rabbi, who sinned - this man or his parents - that he was born blind?" This was the common explanation of sickness or disability in the ancient world.

Jesus does not accept this interpretation. He answers them: "Neither he nor his parents sinned; **it is so that that the works of God might be made visible through him.**"

In Romans 8:28 St. Paul assures us that "God makes all things work together for the good of those who love him." "**All things.**" Sometimes it's hard for us to see or understand, but Jesus is the Light of the world who scatters the darkness.

In today's second reading from the Letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul declares: "You were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." It is this light, alive in our hearts, that gives us hope and allows us to bring hope to others.

More than ever, my brothers and sisters, we need to reflect upon our connectedness as members of the Body of Christ and the Communion of Saints. And as faithful Christians have tried to do throughout history, we are called to reach out to our neighbors regardless their religion.

I ask each of you to think of someone who is perhaps alone in their home during this time of "self-isolation." Give them a call. Let us also remember to be patient and kind towards others, especially in the grocery store. And let us hold one close in prayer. As we heard last Sunday: "The love of God has been poured

out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit." We are never truly alone; God holds all of in the palms of his infinitely big hands.

A few practical tips:

1. The daily readings from Scripture can be found on the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org).
2. Please frequently check out our Facebook page as well as that of the Diocese of Gary.
3. Here at OLC we are looking into the possibility of live-streaming Sunday and weekday Masses.
4. If the parish does not have your email address, please send it to us at church@olcweb.org.

God bless you all!

Fr. Peter