

Back Then and Now:

Five weeks back—for a majority of people—most of our problems could be solved by a visit to the doctor, the bank, a therapist, or someone else. Five weeks back most people felt that their future was in their own hands: they felt they could become anything they wanted to be. This applied not only to a career or personal relationships but also even to sexuality, even to changing of gender.

But not today! Today, doctors, science and governments can't deliver us from Covid19; this virus has suddenly sprung up and set the whole world aback. It has destroyed the world economy, put millions out of work, isolated us in our homes. It has shocked us into the simple realization that we are not in charge.

"God is showing them who the Boss is": These are words of my ninety-three year old aunt living in London, Ontario. "Just as we cannot see the virus attacking us, so, too, the One we cannot see is the solution": the words of one our parishioners. "God is destroying all their idols one by one": these are the words of a priest friend; meaning that all our delusions of being in charge are being knocked down one by one.

Salvation Then and Now:

In the time of Jesus, the word "salvation" meant many things. There was salvation from foreign oppression, and also there was salvation from sickness, famine or from demonic power. In fact, one needed to be saved from everything—from war to sin. In most of the ancient cultures different gods dealt with specific areas of need and these gods needed to be won over, their anger appeased, placated by offerings and sacrifices.

But then God revealed Himself to Israel. He revealed Himself as a God who cared for His people. He revealed Himself as a God who wanted to "save" His people from their sin. Why? Sin is another word for being separated from God. The scary thing is this separation can be forever, beyond the grave, without end, everlasting.

"Who will save us—save me?" Today, this may be a conscious or subconscious question for many people. Metaphorically, today's world is like a man in danger of drowning frantically trying to grab the rope thrown to him to save him. This word "save" comes from the noun "salvation". Five weeks back the word "salvation" was not a very much-used word. Many of us did not think we needed saving from anything. Things have changed. Covid19 has made sure of that!

"I have seen the Lord!" That was then, what about now?

These are the words of Mary of Magdala, in our Gospel today, on that first Easter Sunday. She rushed back to the Apostles in great excitement, joy, and exhilaration saying, "I have seen the Lord"!

How does the resurrection of Jesus make a difference for you and I today? You might think that the answer is obvious but that is not what everyone thinks. Some will say, "So what? Even if Jesus was raised from the dead (and there are witnesses to that fact) what has that got to do with us". This statement can only come from those who are so far from God that they are not able to see a glimpse of the divine in the ordinary matters of each day. There is an old Christian saying, "For the believer, no proof is required; for the unbeliever, no proof is possible."

Why does the believer not require proof? Well we are promised that if we believe, if we seek the God of truth, then God will come to meet us everyday. Jesus promised this elsewhere in Matthew's Gospel, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." To believe means we have to say yes to Him. It means we must make a blind act of faith in Him. It means we must pray to Him. We can pray with the father of the possessed boy in the Gospel who said to Jesus, "I believe; help my unbelief". When we make this act of faith from the depth of our hearts, Oh!, how wonderful is the flood of light that enters into our souls; how wonderful is the knowledge of salvation from death and sin given to us in this light.

Then Mary Madelene's words of exhilaration on that first Easter Sunday will become ours this Easter:

"I have seen the Lord!"

Prayer of the Faithful
THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD
Easter Sunday
APRIL 12, 2020

Leader:

In trust, we place our needs before God our Father,
rejoicing because Christ has triumphed over
death and entered into glory.

LECTOR: Risen Lord, Hear Our Prayer.

Grant that on this Easter Day, we—the Church—with Mary Magdalene
may cry out, “I have seen the Lord”.

We pray...

We bring You our world today—those suffering from the
Corona Virus, especially those in intensive care. For the sick and
elderly who at this time are housebound, isolated and unable to
see or be with their loved ones:

We pray...

As Your children give us the joy of saying to our troubled world,
“He is Risen, trust Him”. Alleluia!:

We pray...

We bring you health workers throughout the world and particularly
here in Canada, who at great personal risk and sacrifice, are attending
to the needs of victims of this devastating global pandemic. Keep them
safe:

We pray...

Comfort the sick and their families (especially) Candelabra
Ferolino; Munchie Reyes; Aisha Miranda; Samuel Jareno;

We pray...

Give your life to the faithful departed (especially):
those who have died from the virus; _____

We pray...

Leader:

Almighty Father,
your beloved son has risen from the dead,
as he promised us.
In peace and joy we present our prayers to you,
through the same risen Lord,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.