

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community † Spirit of Christ Mission

The Third Sunday of Lent-A March 15, 2020

Exodus 17:3-7; Psalm 85:1-2, 6-7, 8-9; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42

Homily ~ Father Ed Hislop

It is on this Third Sunday of Lent and on the next two Sundays, that the Church—here and in every place dares to stand in front of the world, inviting all to “look and see” whether we are living the Gospel which we dare to claim we believe. These are the Lenten Sundays of “Scrutiny” when our life, attitudes and actions are scrutinized in light of our baptismal commitment to live the Gospel, and gather for the Lord’s Supper in holy communion as we make our way to the great Easter.

These can be unsettling Lenten Sundays, as fear again takes us captive as the “Corona Virus pandemic” grips our attention, and fills us with concern and worry, as the very center and focus of our faith and worship begins to be a cause of fear, separating us from one another, even as we attempt through our caring actions to protect one another with whom we gather and those who live around us.

So this is a good day to begin a scrutiny of our faith, actions and ministries. These three Sundays are meant to be a public scrutiny, a public examination of conscience challenging us and the whole church to wonder how our faith and our call to Christ’s mission, effects not only every element of our living, but whether or not our belief, worship and service makes a difference, especially during these “virus” days. But on these Sundays we are also to “scrutinize” the values and actions of the culture and society in which we live, in light of the common good of all.

If it was you or me or all of us together at that well today...we might wonder: How thirsty am I, are we, is the Church? What is that thirst which never seems to be quenched? Today, due to this crisis the fonts are empty, the well seems to be dry! But that emptiness ought to instill wonder about more than just this current crisis, lest we become obsessed with just the immediate. The “virus” comes in many forms. Could that emptiness, a different kind of virus, be those

things I do or do not do, and do over and over again knowing it’s not right, but feeling also that there is something missing?

And what about the Church, here and in every place, do we even know that we thirst? Does that thirst, and our corporate thirst, come from a “virus,” a failure to seek God; from a greed and selfishness that divides and imposes a fear of others? A fear too easily embraced in days of crisis like these days. Do many thirst because of the “virus” of hatred, prejudice, exclusion and division which seems to have contaminated our world and our country, a virus which enslaves others and keeps them separate and makes them sick?

Are we thirsty because in the words of Pope Francis’ encyclical on the Environment: *...Our sister earth “now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her... reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.”*

Could this corona virus be a cry from the earth, dug up, burned, ravaged and made into a garbage dump?

Does thirst [or a virus] come from the degradation of others who are perceived as “different” or when the wisdom and dignity of the elderly is denied or the dreams of youth dismissed? The mentally ill abandoned or sent to the streets? Is thirst unquenched when the addicted are not provided the care and services needed for healing? When the



immigrant, the Samaritan woman of our day, is blamed sent away and kept out? How contagious, we might wonder is that virus? And how do we protect ourselves from it?

Are we still thirsty because there is a virus afoot finding ways to justify and permit the killing of others in the name of justice, capital punishment, revenge and restitution; or “the right to choose” who will be born and when we or others die? Are we still thirsty because we have not yet chosen the fullness of life for the already born. How contagious is that virus? And in an age where relationship and love can be so trivialized, with sex so casual and meaningless, or seen as a commodity for which people can be abused, bought and sold, is it any wonder that thirst persists as a contagious virus?

The Corona Virus has been among us in many ways for a very long time and it is contagious.

The cry of Moses, who sought to speak the truth and call the people to deeper faith, rings true today as the virus around us is named. The people were deaf to his call and they grew angry at his challenge. “What shall I do? A little more and they will stone me.” Here we are at the well, [empty today in our church] bearing the scrutiny of the thirsty and virus ridden world: here we are at the well, like that Samaritan woman, not expecting to be changed, or healed; not expecting to hear something new.

But we are here! We are faithful! We thirst for what is true and beautiful. **WE THIRST TO HONOR THE PAST, SERVE THE PRESENT AND PROVIDE FOR THE FUTURE.** We are here and we are demonstrating our genuine care through our amazing generosity and deep faith. In our prayer and good works, in our gathering around Table with spirited worship and joyous song, by the love of God and service of neighbor we are finding the vaccine of healing in

this house for the Church, in this place where the body of Christ is washed, touched, clothed, fed, healed and served.

“Give me a drink,” we suddenly hear again. The thirsty, us, who do not know we are thirsty, are asked to quench the thirst of Christ! **CHRIST, WHO IS EVERYONE WHO TRULY THIRSTS, EVERYONE WHO IS PARCHED AND BESET BY A VIRUS ON THIS EARTH.**

“Give me a drink,” and give a drink to all who are kept from the well of life. Today we do not drink from the holy cup, we do not sip of the life blood of Christ; and so we feel an emptiness—the emptiness of a virus with many names; but still we care deeply for one another and for the many, and long even more for the warmth of the drink we do not sip today. We do not hold the sacred chalice, but still we hear the words, “Give me a drink:” Words from the Christ all around us: The ones thirsting for healing; food and home; longing for a drink of compassion, hoping for a sip of heart-warming joy. Now we do not drink, but we **give** a drink of faith, hope and healing love **to Christ**, whose heart and blood is seen and felt in the longing and fear of the sick, forgotten, unwelcomed and lonely, all beset by the virus of many names all around us. Today, that Christ says, *“Give me a drink, my thirst is felt in every human person.”*

“Give me a drink,” because the love of God has been poured out into **your** heart and my hope in you will not be disappointed! So let these virus days be a time of faith, renewed hope and deliberate service, for even now “The Lord is in our midst.”

“Give me a drink” and leave behind the water jar filled with your expectations, fears and the virus of the day, and wait to be warmed and vaccinated again with the heart-warming wine of life.

