



ST. AUGUSTINE PARISH

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6 May 2020

My dear friends:

Praised be Jesus Christ! Now and forever!

It is my constant prayer that this letter finds each of you and your families well. This coming weekend the Responsorial Palms is *Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you*. This simple line, which we are called to repeat over and over again really puts this time of pandemic in perspective. I've been asked a question about the pandemic: "Is this God's judgment/wrath being poured out upon us for the sins of the modern world?" The simple answer is NO! But, there is a longer answer... and it starts at the very beginning.

Before God created the heavens and the earth, "the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters." (Gen. 1:2) In other words, there was chaos. But, then God brought about order in the universe through the creation of light, the land, the sea, and all creatures and eventually us! And he found His creation to be very good. Then, we humans, made a mess of things and reintroduced chaos into the Lord God's ordered creation... we call this moment Original Sin. And although we never have to sin personally, the Original Sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, gives us the proclivity to sin. Sin, corporate and individual, is an absence of the good; or easier said, an evil. Every time we sin, we add to the chaos that exists in the world and move it farther away from the order that existed in the beginning. Theologically, diseases are also an absence of the good... they too are an evil; and were able to take hold when the world stopped being properly ordered. So, we can say that all diseases, including COVID-19, are caused by us and our propensity for sin.

It can be easy to think that this pandemic is caused by God, because he allows it to happen... but just because we know something is going to happen doesn't mean that we are the cause. Pope Francis in his recent *Urbi et Orbi* address (to the City [of Rome] and to the World) stood in an empty St. Peter's Square and reminded us this is not a time of God's judgment, but a time to live differently. Specifically, addressing God, he said: "it is not the time of your judgment, but of our judgment: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others."

This brings me back to the response for the Psalm: *Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you*. In this time of pandemic we seek the Lord's mercy and kindness and benevolence to bring us back into right order, for it is the Lord who forgives sin and who will do away with this and all disease (working with our faith and reason). And, we are called in these troubled and difficult times to place our trust in the Lord.

I'm reminded of the story of a man who died in a flood. He was a man of deep faith. As the waters rose around his house, the police came knocking, telling him to evacuate. His response, "My trust is in the Lord, He will save me." He would not leave. The waters continued to rise, forcing him to move to the second floor of his home. Someone in a rowboat came by and tried to convince him to get in, but he responded: "My trust is in the Lord, He will save me." He would not leave. The waters continued to rise even higher, forcing him out onto his roof. A rescue helicopter spotted him and dropped a rope, he wouldn't take it saying: "My trust is in the Lord, He will save me." He drowned in the flood. Because he was such a man of faith, he was welcomed into Heaven where he got to see God face to face. He asked the Lord: why didn't you save me? The Lord's response was: "I sent the police, a man in a rowboat and a helicopter... what more did you want!"

Our trust is to be in the Lord, but we must keep our eyes and our hearts open to His actions working amongst us... and we, as members of the Church, which is His body, are called to be His hands, His feet, His arms and His heart for all of our brothers and sisters... especially those who are in most need... the poor, the sick, the downtrodden, the lonely.

Work in the church continues. The last piece of scaffolding came out of the church last Thursday afternoon and left the parking lot yesterday (Tuesday, May 5)! With the scaffolding down the artists were able to quickly add the new stencil patterns to the church walls – in the apse, behind the Lourdes grotto and behind the pieta shrine. They were also able to

complete the “new” wainscot around the entire church. I say “new” because it is based on the original stencil pattern from 1914. With this work completed, 99% of the work by Evergreene Architectural Arts is completed!

We hope this afternoon to receive the first CAD sketches for the new woodwork that will adorn the church... the high altar, the shrines (St. Mary, St. Joseph, St. Augustine, Sacred Heart), and the confessionals. Still working to get the ambo out of New York City. We did discover that the new ambo comes from the closed All Saints Church in Harlem.

Once the scaffolding came out, Father Michael, the seminarians and I started the process of removing the carpet from the nave floor. After reviewing the floor underneath, I have decided to have the hardwood we found restored. I am very grateful to our parishioners Brittany and Dale Farrell who have volunteered to refinish to floors for cost!

The church is filthy right now, and I know some of you have already volunteered to come help clean... we will be calling upon you as soon as all the dirt settles (we’re going to create another mess when we sand the floor). Of course, we will need to follow all the social distancing guidelines when we gather.

A few other things to note: This coming Sunday, May 10th is Mother’s Day! To all you moms out there (and not just the biological kind) thank you for saying yes! like the Blessed Mother to the vocation that the Lord has call you. Know of our prayers and love for all of you. You children, don’t forget to call and wish your mom, happy Mother’s Day... you can still do this even if she has gone home to God... remember, as Catholics, we believe that life is changed, not ended in death. To you moms, if you don’t hear from your kids by about 8PM, call them up, say “Happy Mother’s Day!”, hang up and turn off your phone!!!! 😊

I just learned as I was writing this letter that one of our young parishioners, Yubin Fosco, a 1st grader, placed 5th in the “Read Ready Covington” Program. Congratulations to Yubin and to mom and dad (Heather and Pete)!!! We share your joy!

We have begun selling our Summer Raffle Split-the-Pot tickets. You can buy them on the parish website, or by mailing in a check to the parish office or by stopping by the parish office. I hope you will consider purchasing a ticket... or ten! Please also encourage others to do so as well. We will only sell 4000 tickets giving the parish a profit of around \$22,000! The tickets are \$10.00 each. If we sell all 4000 tickets, the first-place winner will take home \$14,000; second-place \$2,800; and third-place \$1,200.

Please allow me to also say thank you to all of our parishioners who have been able to keep up with their regular church support and capital campaign pledges! We have been holding our own!! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

And, as always, thank you for your faith in our Lord Jesus and for your continued commitment to St. Augustine Parish! If you need ANYTHING – call the rectory/office – 859-431-3943.

Prayers and Blessings!

Very Reverend Daniel L. Schomaker
Pastor

Parish Mass Intentions

Monday, May 4 – **Tom Dressman, Sr.**
Tuesday, May 5 – **Tashawn Feldman**
Wednesday, May 6 – **Purgatorial Society**
Thursday, May 7 – **People of the Parish**
Friday, May 8 – **Deceased Members of the Meier Family**
Saturday, May 9 – **Deloris & John Huellemeier**
Sunday, May 10 – **Celine Greene (9am) & Clara Voskuhl (11am)**

Monday, May 11 – **Purgatorial Society**
Tuesday, May 12 – **Mary Gronefeld**
Wednesday, May 13 – **Celine Greene**
Thursday, May 14 – **Jack Lane**
Friday, May 15 – **McKenzie Monds**
Saturday, May 16 – **Ed & Bea Staverman**
Sunday, May 17 – **Linda Lonneman & Family (9am) & St. Monica Society (11am)**