

Fourth Sunday of Lent. Time to get outside

March 22, 2020

Dear Friends,

Happy fourth Sunday of Lent. I hope and pray that you are managing this abrupt transition as well as you can. While this coronavirus hibernation period is temporary, not knowing how long temporary means can be even more unsettling. I highly recommend you take some time each day to get outside and feel the sun's warmth or the coolness of the wind and rain upon your face, (always maintaining safe distance protocol). Below is a reflection from Fr. John McDonagh. I know several of you have tried contacting him. Until his Williams email is up and working, you can reach him at the following email address: j.mcdonagh@diospringfield.org. Here's a link to Fr. John celebrating today's mass, <https://www.willinet.org/>
Mass is the third show in the slider.

Be well and Keep the Faith.

Tracy

From Fr. John:

Greetings,

May God bless us with good health, patience and success in finishing the year! We may meet people in our families, teams, classes or in the news who make wonderful contributions, despite their physical challenges. This week for example, Washington State Lt. Governor Cyrus Habib, who is sight impaired, made an announcement. He had met success as a legislator, authoring the Washington State Voting Rights Act and a bill that expanded the state's paid sick leave policy. As Lt Governor, he emphasized access to higher education and youth leadership development. This week, instead of announcing his anticipated campaign for reelection, Lt. Gov Habib announced his desire to become a Jesuit priest. "It is not that I want to abandon causes that I care about such as education, voting rights. While enjoying the accomplishments in the political arena, I wondered if I can personally derive a sense of joy from this life? I have discerned that political life is not the path of happiness for me." Despite all the accolades, he sensed over time a hunger or thirst for something that would not be unquenched. While Lt. Governor Habib manages to succeed with his sight limitations remarkably, he also is not afraid to expand his horizons. He certainly is not afraid, over time, to pose the question: "What matters?"

I am impressed that Jesus encountering a blind person brings sight and salvation to him. (Sunday's Gospel John 9:9-41) Jesus' horizon includes the blind person. Jesus'

sees his plight. During this global pandemic, our horizons have an opportunity to expand. We see the health challenges of our neighbor and/or we are aware of their challenges. People in our own families may be quite vulnerable to the virus. I am moved that at Sts. Patrick and Raphael Parish, where I am pastor, the people Wednesday offered shopping bags of food to 175 persons (including 80 children) who came by in a drive-by food pantry. The numbers coming are three times the number that came before the coronavirus. Boy Scouts in the parish are reaching out to senior citizens house bound to do some preliminary yard work (and talk to the seniors from the stairs of their porch to practice social distancing). Personally, I feel better when I reach out to someone that needs help: an ear or an errand.

As we push the start button to complete the rest of the Semester, we may feel some anxiety. We also have an opportunity to ask "What is really important?" That is an uncomfortable question. This is not a time to make a rash decision. In time, "What is important?" becomes clearer. Now, is a time to "stay in the game" by finishing our courses well. Find the space and time to do so. And at the same time, expand our horizon to see others who are surprised they need our help, ear or assistance.

We have not had this experience before. You will be telling your grandchildren someday about it. Reaching out to someone (despite our limitations of sight or age) can help us feel better and be successful. And, as Lt. Governor Cyrus learned, an opportunity to ask "What is really important?"

Wishing you good health: practice social distancing, wash hands. And, ask "What really matters?"

Let us pray for each other,

Fr. John