

# Sunday Reflection

- ◆ **First Reading:** *Deuteronomy 8:2-3,14b-16*
- ◆ **Second Reading:** *1 Cor 10:16-17*
- ◆ **Gospel:** *John 3:51-58*

.....things have changed again since last Sunday, the city of Bristol is short of a statue, and I suppose a few more statues around the country have been smeared with something ; the backlog of NHS regular appointments goes into over 10 million, dentists can only attend to less than a third of their patients, now schools won't be opened 'till September, the hospitality industry looks very uncertain for this summer, most of us are looking slightly unkempt with no barbers nor hairdressers open, the Covid-19 Pandemic is still not gone, and no doubt you are working thru' your own anxieties in the midst of it all ; less than two weeks ago the weather was beautiful, things didn't seem so bad, sunshine has a great effect on the human psyche, but as I write these few lines outside is looking grey and overcast. Don't be surprized if you are feeling down these days, let's call it "the Covid-19-Blues", that awful heavy feeling all over the body and mind, as if, every ounce of energy has been sapped from the sources of your wellbeing ; it's hardly a pleasant experience, quite the contrary, feelings of despair can easily distort our way of seeing things. Such feelings are, I believe, normal in our present circumstances ; I speak as one who is going thru' what I just described. Is there a cure?, Is there a way out of all this? ; Perhaps it would be better to discover, not so much a way OUT, but rather a way thru' the Covid-19-Blues ; here's some help!

Since the start of the Lockdown, how much have you and I worked on our spiritual component?, that's our sacred inner part where we may connect to the world of spirit ; for us believers our sacred inner part connects us to God Holy Spirit, from there we receive spiritual strength in order to help us thru' the difficulties that surround us ;

2. Spiritual strength is a real support as we journey thru' life, we only have to ask for that strength with Faith. What did Jesus say about ASKING for something in his name?, In chapter 7 of st.- Matthew's gospel he said to them **ASK, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU ; SEARCH AND YOU WILL FIND ; KNOCK AND THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED TO YOU**

What should we believers be asking for in the midst of these difficult times that have come upon us since the end of March?, what should we be praying for? Well I suppose that depends on your individual situation ; obviously parents would be praying for the welfare and protection of their children ; business people of Faith would pray that their enterprises will survive the consequences of this pandemic and of course hospital workers would pray that the patients under their care will pull thru' etc., but what about praying for those who, at this stage, are, as the saying goes, "GOING UNDER"?? ; Going Under, in this context, refers to those among us who are already "sinking", the ones who can't cope anymore, as if, their life-force is drained, almost zilch!!

"but" says you "they can always go and talk to a professional", well and good if these services are within immediate reach, and even if they are, such people still need our prayers, and while we pray for those who are presently in a state of despair, we strengthen our own spiritual resources by the power of the Holy Spirit or **"HELP TO CARRY THE OTHER PERSON'S CROSS, AND YOUR OWN BECOMES LIGHTER"** You and I can do just that thru' the power of prayer, not so much praying for ourselves, but for the above mentioned, they need our prayers.....

3. Finally and sadly, I emphasize the word SADLY!! because we can't be together this Sunday as a parish family to celebrate the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour ; what a pity Boris couldn't have said "well! o.k.!!, I'll make a special exception, you can open your church for that very Special Celebration and celebrate together, but it's the only permission I'm giving", that's just my imagination going off-the-rails, a little!! ; As regards the opening times of our parish church for INDIVIDUAL PRAYER, please see the parish newsletter of this weekend ;

In the meantime you and I can reflect on the meaning of the Mass, have you missed it since the start of the Lockdown?, what does it still mean to you?, are you eager to get back to the celebration of the Eucharist? What would our religion look like without the Eucharist?

Have you recently felt a type of spiritual hunger with no Mass and churches closed? ; this also applies to us, priests, we who were ordained to celebrate, I ask myself "am I still one with the lord as I celebrate the Eucharist?, am I still working in order to keep my vocation in tact?" To be honest with you, over the past 12 weeks, celebrating the daily Mass alone here in the parish church is an experience I'd rather forget ; the Mass is to be celebrated together, all of us under the one roof, in front of the altar, present to the Lord and present to each other ; My conclusion being that your priests are missing all of you, and will continue to miss you until this Pandemic has gone, stay healthy!

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