

Reflection for the 4th Sunday of Lent

This past week has truly been a time of uncertainty and of fear. With the Covid-19 Virus continuing to spread in our country and in other parts of the world it is natural for all of us to be concerned. If we look at the history of humanity, we see that humanity has faced many challenges through the centuries, be it war, famine or disease. In all the challenges and trials that people face from one generation to another it is faith in the one true God, the creator of the universe that sustains humanity and provides hope for the future in this world and in the next.

Reflecting on this past week I find myself thinking about the trip I took to the grocery store recently. I was in the store at 7:00 AM and it was not too crowded, if you did not look at the lines to check out. It was surprising to see empty shelves and limited choices of what to buy. The Staff at the store looked tired and overwhelmed. But people that were in the store including the staff were kind and respectful of each other. I do have to admit that as I found myself not able to buy the items that I wanted, it seemed like every time the option that was there was a healthier choice. One of the blessing that might come from this challenging time is that I will end up with a healthier diet.

As we move forward from this crisis and the world returns to a new and better normal, we with faith will be able to see many blessings resulting from this challenging moment in the history of humanity. Just as we can see blessings from the challenging times of the past so we can see the potential of blessings from this time. We can also turn to the past and embrace the prayers of old that sustained one generation to the next.

In the year 1912 the December issue of a small devotional French Catholic publication *La Clochette*, contained a prayer that would be translated into numerous languages and to this day is a very popular prayer. But it is in challenging times such as World War I and World War II that this prayer is most appreciated. The prayer that I am referring to has many titles such as: *Prayer of Saint Francis*, *Peace Prayer*, *Simple Payer for Peace* and *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*. This prayer is often associated with the Italian Saint Francis of Assisi who lived in Italy from 1182 to 1226. This prayer however was not known for close to 700 years after the death of St. Francis. But this prayer clearly is in the spirit of St. Francis, and when it was created it connected with the past as well as the present, and in time it proved to be connected with the future.

As we struggle with our challenges due to the Covid-19 Virus may we learn from the past and trust in God, but may we also draw from the prayers of old. Last week a member of our Parish asked if there was a prayer for the Covid-19 crisis. Drawing from the *Peace Prayer* and the life of St. Francis a prayer developed. May the prayer that follows bring you comfort and peace. In closing know that God was with the generations that have come before us and He is with us today.

Loving God and Creator of us all, I turn to you this day in a time of uncertainty and fear invoking the prayers of old, asking that you make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred let me bring love. Where there is injury let me bring pardon. Where there is doubt and fear let me bring faith. Where there is despair let me bring hope.

Lord in this troubled time, we, your people, turn to you for guidance and hope. Asking that you heal all who are ill. Give wisdom, compassion and understanding to your people. For where there is darkness let there be light. Amen