

THE AWAKENING

I feel like I know how a bear feels when it finally wakes up after a long winter hunkered down in its small shelter. You're groggy, stiff, disoriented, but...full of purpose at the same time. That is how I feel starting to contemplate the return to "normalcy", especially in regards to resuming Holy MASS. We aren't there yet but it's on the horizon and it's exciting to think about getting there. I have never taken our sacred liturgies for granted, but when it's your "job" it can take on a certain level of routine. Not any longer. My spiritual "grogginess" is no more, and I am more than ready to resume HIS work. I pray we all are. I pray we all, if we are not doing so already, are seeing our lives devoted to working for GOD and His desires for each of us. If you do not have this perspective then we must do a better job of getting this message out. When a bear comes out of hibernation, it instinctively knows what it must do and what its purpose is at that moment. As we gradually emerge from our "dens", this is what I hope we can all feel...that our expression of faith will resemble someone expressing their faith. However we are called to do so.

This has been a wild two plus months, and the "excitement isn't over. I have two thoughts on this, each gazing in different directions, and both equally valid. For a lot of us this viral enemy has succeeded in raising the bar of awareness about what terrorism can look and feel like. In this country we seldom experience what a lot of the world encounters as terror, praise be to GOD. Many populations elsewhere are faced with daily threats through abject poverty, armed civil conflict, ruthless drug trafficking, and corrupt government authorities. Especially in parts of Africa, there are viral outbreaks such as Ebola, malaria, polio, Dengue, and a virtual litany of diseases that prowl among the poor. Some, like Ebola, have a 90% death rate for those infected. For perspective, the Covid 19 virus (while very contagious) only kills between 3 - 6% of those infected. All of these diseases are terrifying for the populations they inhabit. In first world countries, we're just not use to this and we are very intolerant of natural causes that threaten us. In America we do experience death from natural disasters, but we move to mitigate and prevent the effects going forward. We build dams to control flooding, engineer buildings to withstand earthquakes, and early warning systems for tornadoes. Over history, natural events have caused the death of anywhere from 40,000 to 4 million deaths in a single occurrence (1931 Yangtze River floods). When it happens all the time, people learn to adapt and accept such events. Not so much in the developed world. Comfort and safety is a prized **achievement** in society. And where is GOD in all this? Hopefully HE is fully embraced and we are looking to HIM for consolation and peace. Hopefully we will see HIM present in all those who work to alleviate suffering, clothing us in a sense of hope and confidence in eternal life. If our hearts become uncontrollably worried and anxious in times like these, then we know what terrorism is about. Hopefully we can see these feelings as the beginning of compassion for others. When collections are taken up for the Church in Africa, Latin America, indigenous people, and others, the Church is trying to provide Heaven's comfort and the hope of Jesus' resurrection. Take this opportunity to assume a different perspective of the world, and with a profound sense of gratitude, embrace the work we share in the mission of the Church as the Body of Christ.

My second thought here strikes closer to home. So many among us own businesses that are their very livelihood. Everything they have is often absorbed in their business and to say they have a lot at stake is an understatement. If they close their doors they have few options to move forward, whether it be age or financial safety nets. When government agencies unilaterally shut down businesses (in this case to limit the spread of disease) they do so with hearts wishing to do the right thing for the greater good. They are not the enemy, they are not operating under some devious conspiracy for political gain, and they are not cold insensitive bureaucrats, and it is not **us against them**. They are doing their best with good intentions. I encourage everyone to ignore the dialogue some present to create drama where it does not exist, conflict where agreement is present, and hatred where peace is struggling to soothe us all. I am, frankly, very tired of the public conversation that undermines the efforts of unity and compassion that responded so remarkably to the Covid 19 crises. Were mistakes made? Yes. For starters, business and government should have been working together on a plan to control the spread, and then to safely resume some level of commerce that also protects investment. Government has a long history of acting to "save us from ourselves". This does not mean they are insensitive or nefarious in their intentions. It just means there is room for disagreement. Virtually every family experiences the same situations. If we want this country to be "Great Again" (I feel it is the greatest country on earth), we must seek a way to truly work together, listening to one another, and respecting the situations of all involved. Does this mean we all get our way? No. But it does mean we can move toward things that make it work for everyone, in some measure, and not just ourselves individually. We will all need to share in the sacrifices that need to be made and we will all be rewarded for our patience, prudence, courage, and wisdom.

If you are still concerned with the health risks in public, please stay home and honor your own feelings. If you must get out and resume work and some forms of play, be responsible and considerate of others and the potential health risk that is still present among us. Especially if you travel. We have to get back to "life" and ensure our community businesses are able to survive, but please be conscious that some are more vulnerable than the rest of us, and...more cautious which is valid also. Please be conscious of the words and intent of the conversations you have about this. We can shape the dialogue in our community by just being thoughtful and polite. Be kind, be aware, and be safe. This Sunday we celebrate the arrival of the Holy Spirit of the Most High who comes to guide, counsel, and teach, among other things. Let's rely on Him to show us the Way through these troubled waters and the Truth that is always present. GOD Bless you All.

See You Soon!!!

Come Holy Spirit !!!!

PAX CHRISTI, Deacon Mike

deaconmike@gunnisoncatholic.org