Message from Fr. Dan

This Sunday is the 5th Sunday of Lent and our Gospel reading is the raising of Lazarus. Jesus is drawing to the end of his earthly mission. His disciples have been accompanying him for almost three years. And here once again they see Jesus showing divine knowledge: he knew how Lazarus's sickness would end, and he knew, without any need for a messenger, when Lazarus had died.

And yet, even at this late point in his ministry, after three years of continually witnessing Christ's miracles, and experiencing his divine wisdom, his disciples still don't understand him; they still don't know their Lord.

They still misconstrue his words - they think he's talking about normal sleep when he is really talking about death. They still doubt his good sense and power - they try to dissuade him from returning to Jerusalem, where his enemies lurk.

After all this time and experience, they just don't get it. Any lesser Lord would have long ago given up on these slow and artless followers, but not Jesus. He is a Lord who serves his followers, teaching them and guiding them to the fullness of life with tireless patience. The needier they are, the more attentive he is, the more eager to give them whatever it takes to help them believe in, trust, and follow him.

And aren't we just like the Apostles? We have been Christians for so long, heard so many homilies, and received Holy Communion so often. And yet, in the middle of life's ups and downs we still find it hard to figure out what God is asking of us. In the middle of life's temptations, we still find it hard to trust him enough to follow his will instead of our whims. But he hasn't given up on us, and he never will. Our Lord is truly Lord, but he is a Lord who rules by love.

We can see this in the current challenge we are facing. It can be easy for us to throw up our arms and question our God. Why, a God who is supposed to be loving and caring, would allow something like the coronavirus to inflect his people. In doing that we are like the Apostles in the Gospel reading, questioning Jesus’ motives. We are further challenged in that we are not able to receive the Eucharist. Something that is so near and dear to our hearts. It can be easy for us to question God’s motives.

We need to trust in God’s plan and know that something good, while at this point it can be hard to believe, will come out of this. We need to trust in the Lord’s plan and to pray for ourselves and all those affected by the virus. For example, the plus for not receiving the Eucharist makes us desire it all the more and helps us to appreciate how blessed we are when we can receive it.

The Rosary is a good pray. It helps us to reflect of Christ’s life and what he has done for us. The Divine Mercy Chaplet is another good prayer. For those of you unfamiliar with it, I have place information about it below. I have also placed a prayer service that I received from Mary Gross, our Director of Religious Education at St. Peters. This prayer service could be used by families and it helps us focus on Lent. While we are unable to come to mass, we can use this prayer to gather us together in the Spirit.

Please know that I keep all of you in my prayers and I am looking forward to when we will be able to gather and celebrate the Eucharist as a community. I thank those who have been able to
continue to support the parish with their tithes. I sleep a little better at night knowing you all are doing what you can. I ask you to continue to do what you can to support our local business people.

I truly believe that something good will come out of all this suffering that we are facing at this time. It is important that we stay true to our God.

God Bless

Fr. Dan

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Prayer service for Families

**Reader:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen

**Reader:** O God, by whose wondrous grace we are enriched with every blessing, grant us so to pass from former ways to newness of life, that we may be made ready for the glory of the heavenly Kingdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen

**Reader:** Let us together reflect on God's Word. Happy are the poor in spirit theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**All:** Forgive us for becoming too attached to all the things we possess, for hold tightly to our own goods, views, and ideas.

**Reader:** Happy the gentle; they shall have the earth for their heritage.

**All:** Forgive us for our lack of understanding or lack of trying to understand all those who do not think as we do.

**Reader:** Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.

**All:** Forgive us if we have ever refused to console those who are in trouble, those who need our support, and those who are lonely.

**Reader:** Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.

**All:** Forgive us for being severe in our judgment of others, for being closed to those who want and need to talk to us, to those against whom we are prejudiced because of their skin color, their income, or their age.

**Reader:** Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

**All:** Forgive us even if we have refused to forgive and forget-if we have acted in bitterness.

**Reader:** Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.
All: Forgive us if we have failed to cooperate with the Spirit in letting each occasion of our living be a revelation of Christ.

Reader: Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God.

All: Forgive us our fights and quarrels, for wanting so much to be right that we miss the opportunity of knowing one another.

Reader: Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

All: Forgive us for being silent when we should speak in support of one another.

Reader: Let us pray.

Set free from our sins, O Lord, we pray, the people who call upon you, that, living a holy way of life, they may be kept safe from every trial. Through Christ our Lord.

The Divine Mercy Chaplet

And Jesus said to St. Faustina:

When they say this chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between my Father and the dying person, not as the just judge, but as the merciful Savior.

If you are unfamiliar with the Divine Mercy Chaplet, it is recited using a Rosary:

Opening Prayer:

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

Repeat 3 times:

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in You!

Pray:

Our Father, Hail Mary and The Apostle's Creed

For each of the five decades (On each “Our Father” bead of the rosary), pray:

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

On each of the 10 “Hail Mary” beads, pray:

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Concluding prayer (Repeat 3 times):

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.
Closing Prayer

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.