

From the desk of Pastor Burkhardt

May 19, 2020

Having lived, now, in the midst of new COVID based realities, we clearly are experiencing uncertain and difficult times, not unlike the experience of the early Christians in the days of Roman Empire. We have never been in the situation we now find ourselves. Our world is turned upside down. Fear, insecurity, and anxiety affects us, those we love, and our communities, including the church.

We are overwhelmed with media advice, much of which is unsubstantiated, incomplete, patently false, and changes daily. We no longer know who to trust to provide us with accurate and verifiable information for good decision making, but it keeps coming at us, from every venue of social media, internet, television, radio and newspapers. Many have shared with me that they feel overwhelmed; confused, lost, and paralyzed by not knowing what is true and therefore not knowing what to do.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, our faith commends us to trust God and hope; not to surrender and be consumed by fear, insecurity, and the anxiety being served up by the world and the worldly. As followers of Jesus, we are to put our trust in God who raised Jesus from the dead and who, in the power of the Holy Spirit, sends us to be God's servants of restoration in the face of brokenness, alienation, and now, pandemic illness. Now is the time to be the Church God wants us and needs us to be.

As much as we are called to be wise in the midst of the coronavirus, we must not allow these temporary circumstances to turn us away from our calling to be God's "hands and feet" in the world. Just the opposite! We must stand with God in the face of the forces of fear, insecurity and anxiety, and bear Gospel witness to the loving, liberating, and life-giving reality of Jesus. We urge everyone, as best as you able, to support these Church efforts by your own time and talents, to continue to care for the poor, marginalized, and now forcibly unemployed [by edict,] while adhering to the COVID safety guidelines offered by qualified medical authorities.

Finally and most earnestly, in the midst of pandemic, we are reminded by the Gospel of our salvation to put our faith, hope and trust in God who has raised Jesus from the dead and given into His hands all glory to eternal life for us, and with it: ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of His gracious love. We are called to be the followers of Jesus sent into the world to do God's will in God's ways. It may not be what we had wished for in our time and place, but it is what we have been given. What we do with it to the glory of God will make a difference.

For these days, let us all pray together every morning the prayer of St. Francis:
Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith, where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.