My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

There is one thing for certain that the Corona Pandemic has forced us to do and that is to assess our priorities. Everyone has been affected by the virus in some way. Sooner or later most will be exposed to it in some way before herd immunity is finally achieved.

The economic consequences of the pandemic have touched everyone even if the virus has not. Consequently, most of us have had to reflect very seriously upon what is truly necessary for our physical and economic survival and what is not. Moreover, everyone must come to grips with the shortness and the tenuousness of our physical life on this planet!

Unfortunately, those without faith, belief in God, or hope in an after-life probably suffer the greatest anxiety. Life here is all that they believe we have. Thus, they must live as long as they can and stay alive at all costs.

Those with true faith are in an entirely different position – For they know in their heart of hearts that they are made for something more. Their belief in God helps them to aspire to the goodness that brings great inner peace even now! And they also trust that God, who is the Supreme Good, will, ultimately, triumph over the worst evil in the world!

Jeremiah was a prophet whom God sent to change the hearts of the Chosen People and their leadership five centuries before the coming of Christ. However, with the exception of only one king, whose reign was short-lived, those in power resisted Jeremiah and wanted him destroyed. Jeremiah had to be constantly vigilant wherever he was because of his unsettling message.

Today, Jeremiah praises God because, somehow, God always protected him and delivered him. In fact, Jeremiah escaped to Egypt and lived in personal spiritual freedom shortly before Jerusalem was destroyed and the Chosen People exiled to Babylon!
In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus teaches us that God has a purpose and a plan behind everything that happens in our lives and in our world. God can even bring goodness and salvation despite the evil that often seems rampant everywhere.

Today, Jesus counsels us to fear no one – and we could add: no thing! God will ultimately triumph. “Nothing is concealed or secret that will not be revealed!” We are not to fear the political powers or the viruses that can wreak havoc and even kill our bodies. God knows all and sees all. Just as He knows what happens to the sparrows in our trees, so, too, He knows us and what happens to us. Furthermore, we have far more value than the sparrows themselves!

What is paramount for us is that we never break faith with Jesus or with the Father who sent him. We cannot let fear of the virus or its economic consequences overpower us or cause us to despair. Very likely, there could be a second, or even a third, wave of the virus. This could happen before a vaccine is available or herd immunity is achieved. Nevertheless, no matter what transpires, we must not give up or begin to lose faith.

St. Paul reminds us that death entered the world through our first parents. They sinned by wanting to be gods themselves. It was not enough for them to be God-like and created in God’s image. They wanted divine autonomy – to be free from the Godhead – And for this they brought suffering and death to all of their children!

This temptation to be accountable to no one is the same temptation to which much of our modern world has succumbed even before these present troubled times. Moreover, that self-serving arrogance is far worse than the virus itself, because it can kill our soul and destroy our relationship with God. This is the reason St. Paul reminds us that although we inherited death from Adam and Eve – we now have eternal life through the gift of Jesus himself!

And so, Brothers and Sisters, let us never lose heart – God knows all things. God can bring goodness and salvation even in the face of the seeming power of evil. May we continue to walk with Jesus no matter what lies ahead. And may our hearts and souls always embrace God who continues to give divine life to us!

Amen.

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