
Love One Another - A Witness of God's Love

Love ONE ANOTHER

BY: ARCHBISHOP JEROME E. LISTECKI



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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Amid the challenges of Coronavirus, when all appear to be frightened and almost panic-stricken, there emerges from the very depth of our personas a sense of our spiritual reality. We have often reflected on the Lord's command to "Love one another," but at this time, we see that love in action as people reach out to one another.

We see that love in doctors, nurses and health professionals who treat patients and those in need of care; in scientists and lab technicians who work feverishly to find treatments, cures and even vaccines; in faithful citizens who are calling neighbors, seniors and shut-ins, offering assistance; and, in our priests who continue to administer the sacraments to those in need. This is a sign of our common humanity, and for people of faith, it is a witness of God's love for us, and therefore, our love for one another.

I recently received a reflection from one of our priests, Fr. Kevin Barnekow. He has been assigned to study for an advanced degree in psychology. He shared his reflections on Lent with me, and now I share them with you.

Lent is a time when we consider the Four Last Things, and the virus-borne threat has occasioned meditation on them with a kind of urgency that is difficult to reproduce under other circumstances. My only other memory of a time like this was the terror of 9/11. How fortunate we were that churches were available to encounter our Suffering and Triumphant Lord, to grieve, to comfort, and to rekindle hope! How sad that our Lent now includes caring for each other as a community precisely by being physically distant.

This Lent for me has been a lesson in prayer, self-denial and the works of mercy that have awoken me from the slumber of a ho-hum, paltry and perfunctory Lent, which I had in my luxury, been content to observe by giving up Coke and scotch.

How do we remain close to the ones we love without jeopardizing their well-being, if not through a renewed understanding of spiritual reality that binds us together, despite the restrictions placed on proximity? How can we allow ourselves to be touched by distant suffering, if not by recognizing it whenever we gaze upon the crucifix and remember the Passion of Christ, the Suffering Servant, whose wounds have healed our most profound infirmities?

The Four Last Things that Father Kevin refers to are death, judgment, heaven and hell. There is no doubt about the finality of our life, but we rarely contemplate their meaning for us. Yet, in our collective angst, the end is before us. It is to Christ and His Church that we turn.

I am sure it was not easy for St. Paul, after his conversion to the faith, to encounter one challenge after the other. However, he had confidence that the Lord would be with him throughout his life journeys.

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all, will he not also give us everything else along with him? ... What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. (Roman 8: 31-37)

As we struggle through the days and weeks ahead, one movement will make us stronger as people of faith, and that is our trust and confidence in God. Hopefully, we will never take the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and reception of the Eucharist for granted. In this desert experience during our Lent, let us join ourselves to Christ and be led to LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Jerome E. ListECKi
Archbishop of Milwaukee



Daily Reflections from Our Bishops

To watch daily video reflections from Archbishop Listecki, Bishop Haines and Bishop Schuerman, please visit www.archmil.org/coronavirus.

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