

From the Pastor  
March 25, 2020  
The Solemnity of the Annunciation

Beloved Faithful of St. Paul the Apostle,

As you know, it has always been my practice to write to our parishioners on a Sunday. However, I write now on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, the Solemnity of the Annunciation. This is the long-foretold day to which the prophets pointed, when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Today, exactly nine months before Christmas, is the dawn of our salvation. The ancient people believed that man was created on March 25th. Now our human nature is taken by God Himself. It is said that even the birds of spring stop building their nests in honor of the great mystery of today. If anything in these trying times, it teaches us that when all seems dark, cold and without hope, God bursts into the human condition and now is forever part of it.

We find ourselves now in this most unique of Lents, a time of pandemic. We do not know how long this crisis will go on nor do we know how things will develop. When we face the unknown, we look for guarantees and explanations in the hypotheses of so-called experts. Often these theories contradict one another and sow doubt and confusion.

As Catholics we believe that if God has permitted calamity to happen, it always achieves its goal of bringing about a greater good which, directly or indirectly, always concerns our souls. Without this core belief and trust, we risk despair.

A simple microbe is capable of bringing humanity to its knees. It is human pride which is brought to its knees. As Our Blessed Mother has said, He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. Modern Man, who has walked on the moon and now plans to do so on Mars, is powerless before an invisible microbe.

We must not fail to profit by the spiritual graces given to us in these difficult times. Now is the time to turn to God. Let our being quarantined not be a house arrest, but rather a family retreat. It is time to pray the Rosary as a family with greater devotion and fervor. Let us not waste our time in front of screens, but calmly cultivate our soul and intellect, as well as the body, which needs nourishment, exercise, fresh air and sunshine.

Now is not the time to allow the world and its corruption to come into our homes. Let us give priority to spiritual goods that no virus can attack. Let us work for that heavenly treasure, which neither the worm nor rust can destroy. Because where our treasure is, there too will be our heart.

Let us change our lives, knowing that we must abandon ourselves to divine providence. Let us pray that when this passes, people will not go back to the way they were, but rather, spend the rest of their lives in peace and love of God.

Let us not become discouraged for Our Lord is among us “now and forever.” God will never abandon us.

As your pastor I have been praying for all of you at the altar of God when I offer Holy Mass each day. In a sense you are all there with me, for I place all of you on the paten and offer you up to God.

Each day I make it my habit to visit the Church and pray at the altar of St. Joseph. There I place all of you under his paternal protection.

May God bless you  
and may Mary keep you.

Monsignor James F. Pereda