

**I. HOLY DARKNESS ... now those words just don't seem to go together ... what do HOLY and DARKNESS have in common? when we think of HOLY we most likely think of LIGHT, JOY, PEACE, SECURITY .... not darkness**

- but the Scriptures are full of moments of DARKNESS .... moments when God moves in great power and strength ... when God is working some great miracle!
- for example, in the very first verses of the Bible, God calls from the chaos and darkness of the abyss ... LIGHT!
- when the people of Israel are enslaved in Egypt and God sends 10 plagues to convince PHARAOH and the EGYPTIANS to let the Israelites go free ... what is the 9th plague? DARKNESS .... darkness just before the greatest event of Old Testament history: THE PASSOVER and the EXODUS ... still remembered and celebrated by devout Jews and Christians ..... because those events foreshadow 2 of our MOST PRECIOUS SACRAMENTS: Baptism and Eucharist
- we are told that MOUNT SINAI was shrouded in darkness as Moses received the 10 Commandments that still guide God's chosen people
- the Psalmist composing Psalm 97 writes: Clouds and darkness are round about him ...
- and describing the CENTRAL AND PIVOTAL event of all history ... Saint Matthew writes of the Crucifixion of Jesus: There was darkness over the whole land ...
- HOLY DARKNESS ..... before God acts in power and in light, in triumph and in victory .... THERE IS DARKNESS ....

**II. THAT WAS CERTAINLY THE CASE FOR THE MAN BORN BLIND WHOM WE MEET in the Gospel for this 4th Sunday of Lent ...**

- the man has never known the light ... has never seen anyone or anything before .... he has been enveloped in darkness ....
- that is, UNTIL HE ENCOUNTERS JESUS CHRIST .....
- Jesus gives the man what he needs the most .... HIS SIGHT ..... now he can see!

### **III. OUR COUNTRY ALONG WITH THE ENTIRE WORLD HAS BEEN THROWN INTO darkness .... the darkness we call COVID-19 .... a CORONAVIRUS ...**

- the pandemic of CONTAGION has also sparked a FINANCIAL DARKNESS with many people UNEMPLOYED because of FURLOUGH or even TERMINATION ...
- on top of that, there is a SPIRITUAL DARKNESS ... the darkness brought on by fear and anxiety .... uncertainty about the UNKNOWN .... COMPOUNDED, OF COURSE, by the suspension of public Masses throughout most of our country and in many countries of the world .....
- THESE WORDS OF SAINT PADRE PIO might be haunting for us: THE WORLD WOULD BE BETTER OFF GOING WITHOUT THE LIGHT OF THE SUN THAN GOING WITHOUT HOLY MASS ....
- but perhaps the DARKNESS was already there .... present among us and within us but we refused to acknowledge it ... THE DARKNESS OF SIN, mortal sin lurking in our lives, our homes, through our computers and the internet ...
- the TERRIBLE DARKNESS of pornography, human trafficking, and of course, the TAKING OF INNOCENT HUMAN LIFE IN THE WOMB through abortion at all stages of life .... and even CELEBRATING when legislation legalizing abortion EVEN TO THE MOMENT OF BIRTH was passed in some states ....
- the ways we have entered into the FILTH and DIRT of the world and the culture of death that surrounds us are TOO NUMEROUS FOR ME TO MENTION RIGHT NOW .... but we all know what they are ....

### **IV. THE ROSE VESTMENTS THAT I WEAR INDICATE THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END of the tunnel .... this 4th Sunday of Lent is LAETARE SUNDAY ....**

- Laetare means REJOICE because the triumph and victory of God in Jesus Christ is in SIGHT ....
- isn't it INTERESTING that the word QUARANTINE comes from the same root as our word for LENT .... 40 days .....
- OUR WHOLE WORLD IS IN QUARANTINE ..... meaning, our whole world is in Lent ..... a period of PRAYER, FASTING, AND WORKS OF MERCY ....
- these are our greatest WEAPONS and the tools that God has given us to use as we await his mighty hand and the MIRACLE OF GRACE he is preparing for us ...

**V. SO, IN CLOSING, ALLOW ME TO ENCOURAGE YOU IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS**  
**ways that will make our darkness HOLY ....**

1. the remedy for the darkness of PERSONAL SIN is the Sacrament of Confession; Father Phillip and I are available for Confession at our usual times, meaning from 8:30 AM to 9 AM on Saturday mornings and from 3 PM to 4 PM on Saturday afternoon as well as on First Fridays from 6 PM to 7 PM; you may telephone us to set up a personal appointment for Confession;
2. read the Bible at home .... perhaps as family .....
3. there are many RESOURCES online right now, including our own YOUTUBE CHANNEL where we will be recording and broadcasting Masses, the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, as well as other devotions and seminars;
4. fasting is a powerful tool that makes our prayers more pleasing to God .... choose some form of fasting each and every day during this crisis;
5. remember to be charitable, patient and kind .... first with those loved ones with whom we live ... OUR OWN FAMILIES .... and then let that charity flow out into the community ... CHECK on elderly or sick neighbors .....
6. hold up in prayer our PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS, OUR GOVERNOR AND ALL HER ADVISORS as well as our local Emergency Management Team ... our police officers and firefighters, our EMTs and first responders .... all scientists and medical personnel WHO ARE ALL PUTTING THEIR OWN LIVES AND HEALTH on the line for us ....
7. ABOVE ALL, remain calm and at peace ..... do not be afraid ... have hope because God works his greatest miracles out of the darkness .....

After everything I've shared it should come as no surprise that Saint John the Evangelist writes that ***on the morning of the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb ... WHEN? while it was still dark ....***

- she thought his body had been taken away from her ... just as the Lord's Body has been taken from you, the lay faithful .... BUT REJOICE .... because the Lord says: ***Do not be afraid. It is I .... I am with you always!***
- ***let's work together to make this darkness HOLY!***