

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – FEBRUARY 7, 2021

## Dear Parishioners and Families,

The three readings for this Sunday bring many disparate thoughts. Each has an application to today's scene.

The reading from the Book of Job finds Job at almost his lowest emotional ebb. He clearly has a feeling of hopelessness and describes himself worse than a slave. He wonders how long this life is going to last. Many people today find themselves in these straits.

Job cannot understand this mystery in his life. Why has God done this to me? Job patiently waits for God to lift him out of this depression. Patience and prayer are two of the prescriptions that Bishop David Bonnar gave to priests. Pray and be patient in your work. I encourage this prayer and patience for each of you.

Paul's Letter to the Corinthians speaks of the privilege of bringing the Good News of the Gospel to all, especially the weak and struggling. Preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments is certainly a privilege for me. The Gospel and the Sacraments bring God's peace and grace.

God has blessed me with very little fear and excellent health. Pope Francis is clear: "We are to act as the facilitators of God's grace. The Church is the House of the Father where there is place for everyone with all their problems." (Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*). **We are to promote not limit the Sacraments.**

The Gospel from Mark describes Jesus curing many and driving out the negative spirits that haunt people. One might ask why Jesus doesn't do the same in our day. I suggest he does.

In the time of Jesus there were very few, if any advanced medical people. Medicine was rudimentary. Today, Jesus continues to heal many but works through the hands of doctors nurses, and so many other medical staff. Miracles are still taking place but they are not as dramatic as in the time of Jesus.

Illnesses and struggles are simply part of natural life in all of nature. These are natural events, not events designed by God. They are part of an evolutionary world of constant change.

When the Lord gave us dominion over the world, God wanted us to use his creative abilities to address setbacks and to multiply advances. If the advances are startling and rather immediate, we call them miracles.

COVID 19 is a mixed miracle. This virus is an evolutionary happening which is destructive to the human race. The human race in its part has labored very successfully to find resolutions to this epidemic and we should laud the positive accomplishments of so many in all walks of life.

Certainly, many thousands of people have succumbed to human death because of this virus. However, human death is not the end of life, but for many it is an avenue to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Job of the Old Testament could only have a shorter view of human life. Were Job living in the Christian era, the final phrase of his reading today would read like this: Remember Lord that my life is like the wind; I shall see happiness again because the Lord leads me to the kingdom of heaven.