

Providence and Pandemic

So many thoughts have been running through my mind since the Coronavirus came to town! One recurring phase has been the backdrop for my journey during Lent, Holy Week, and now the liturgical Easter season. That phrase is a very well-known Dickens' quote: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times..." The fact that this pandemic arrived in our Lenten season I don't think was an accident but a call from the Provident God to experience more profoundly the impact of Christ's death and Resurrection on each of us and on humanity. Christ's death for us, was the "best" of times. Sounds crude, awful and disrespectful perhaps, but in reality, Christ's death on a cross was for us the moment that he gave us an unbelievable gift! The readings in Holy Week say it all. "...But he was pierced for our transgressions; crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed" For us indeed, the best of times - the gift of peace and the healing of our wounds by taking on all of our weaknesses and sinfulness. It was also the "worst" of times for his Mother in her loss, for the disciples in their confusion, for the budding of a new community with a new message about the power of love and forgiveness. By comparison, we would be thought of as crazy to define these COVID controlled days as the "best" of times! Surely it is the worst of times for so many in fearful, sorrowful, anxiety filled ways. But COVID is calling forth the "best" in humanity as people reach out to help each other, as care givers stay the course in the face of so many life threatening challenges; as the simple people in what the world calls "necessary workers" like bus/truck drivers, housekeepers, dietary workers in hospitals and nursing homes continue to serve. It is one "best" moment in time when love, caring and forgiveness are evident in the midst of a terrible global crisis. It is also one "worst" moment in time when we, like Mary and the disciples grieve as a world, as a local community, and as individuals at the devastating loss of so many loved ones among us. The Dickens quote goes on to say, "it was the season of light... it was the spring of hope...." Easter is the season of light and that spring of hope! May we move from this dark COVID moment to that Easter light that continues to bring about care and concern for one another and hope in the continued presence of a risen Christ in our midst.

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