Lent 4 A-Coronavirus

# MDP of God

In today’s Gospel we heard of a man born blind – who comes to see that Jesus is the Savior

That is contrasted to people who could supposedly see, *who were in essence blind to the action of God in the world*

Notice, it was the **important people** who failed to see God’s action in the world.

 It was the movers and shakers of the day

 The influential people

The ones who called all the shots – *who refused to see God’s action in the world*

They had so hardened their hearts against Jesus, **that it didn’t matter that He had** healed the blind man – raised Lazarus from the dead - fed the multitudes with a few loaves and two fish - healed people who were lame or drove out demons

**They were blind to all that.**

They had made up their minds that Jesus was no good – that Jesus was wrong – that Jesus wasn’t the Savior that Jesus would lead people astray – *they were blind to all that He did*

My dear friends, the more things change, the more they stay the same

 The important people of our day

 The movers and shakers

The Hollywood elite – The news and entertainment media – The federal courts, many of our elected officials--have for the most part rejected the Gospel

I think it’s important that we recognize that the man born blind put his faith in Jesus, and maintained that faith despite rejection and opposition.

 **We need to do the same.**

 Like the man born blind, we need healing that only Jesus can give us.

Like the man born blind, when we seek to make Jesus Lord of our lives, we will find ourselves rejected by some

But, like the man born blind—*strengthened by God’s grace* –**we can give witness to Jesus**

My friends—I think today’s readings can fill us with great hope as we as a nation—*we as a world* –deal with Coronavirus pandemic

 Today’s psalm was psalm 23—the Good Shepherd psalm

We prayed, **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want--**beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul--He guides me in right paths--for his name’s sake. *Even though I walk in the dark valley*----**I fear no evil;** *for you are at my side*---With your rod and your staff---that give me courage.

Well folks—*right now we’re in a dark valley*—but God is with us

The fact is there is nothing that we face on earth that is not an opportunity for us to grow in faith—to grow in trust of the Lord---///*there is nothing we will face* **that is not an opportunity for us to surrender to God**—to put ourselves in His hands

And when we do that we can give incredible witness to the power of faith to fill us with hope

St Paul in our 2nd reading today said—“You were once in darkness—*but now you are in light of the Lord*---**live as children of the light**.”

We live in a world that right now is filled with darkness—filled with fear—filled with anxiety

But we know that God’s plan is playing out--- no matter what happens—we know Jesus is on the throne—Jesus is the King of kings—Jesus is the all- knowing Lord of the Universe

Nothing is going to happen to us that Jesus isn’t aware of and that Jesus can’t work our eternal good from

*The trouble is often we have our plans*—and they don’t match up with His plans

 *So we get angry* **that our plans aren’t working out**

 *We get angry* **that things aren’t going our way**

 {shake fist} **God—how dare you let this happen**

So for instance-in today’s gospel—*God was working in the world*—**but people refused to recognize it**—in fact –*they were hostile to God’s working in the world*

I assure you my friends—that God is working in our world today—that God is working in our lives today—and that God in His love will not allow anything to happen to us that He can’t use for our eternal good

Now don’t get me wrong—that doesn’t mean that everything will work to our eternal good---**that depends on us**

You see—*if we get angry at God* **instead of praying and meaning**—“thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

 Then it won’t work to our eternal good

*If we hold on to our plans and desires*—**rather than surrendering** to what God wants to do in our lives---then chances are it won’t work out to our eternal good

Well then—why would God allow that to happen?

 In His love—He wants to show us the state of our souls

**Many of the saints throughout the ages have pointed out that a faith “Destroyed by hardship”---was not a faith worth having**

 Let me say that again:

Many of the saints throughout the ages have pointed out that a faith “Destroyed by hardship”---was not a faith worth having

You see--a faith where a person truly loves God—isn’t going to be destroyed by hardship

A faith where a person really means it when they pray: “thy will be done on earth as it is heaven”---isn’t going to be destroyed by hardship

*A faith destroyed by hardship* **was a superficial faith**—a faith not worth having—*a faith that was an eternal insurance policy*

 What do I mean by that?

It was a faith where the person had the attitude of “OK God I’ll believe—I’ll go to church—I’ll obey a lot of the commandments—because I want to go to heaven---*but God* **you’ve got to make it easy**—you’ve got to make sure that everything goes smoothly for me here---you can’t let me face too much disappointment---**or else God**

Because then God—I won’t believe—I won’t obey—I won’t worship—and I won’t let my family worship either---**I’ll show you—////that’s not love**

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The bible tells us—*that the followers of Jesus will have crosses in their lives*—**no ifs ands or buts about it**---*the followers of Jesus will face the cross*

Because as followers of Jesus we are called to be co-workers with Him—*and He saved the world through the cross*

 As members of His Body—*we will share the cross*

I have to tell you—we have several parishioners now—who are bearing very heavy crosses--- **disabling crosses**

And the attitude they have is so inspiring—their attitude is—“You know this isn’t what I want—but I want to put myself in His hands—I trust that He’ll do what’s best—even if I understand”

Their attitude is, “**Thy will be done”**

And their faith shines so brightly in the darkness of our world---I know their faith has inspired me---and I know their faith is inspiring so many others

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**One last quick point**—we have kind of a built in meter to help us see where our hearts are at this point—the state of our souls---////what do I mean by that?

Well—if your spending more time checking out where your 401K is at – than you spending time reading the bible— *that’s not a good sign*

If your spending more time watching the news *needing to hear everything going on everywhere in the world*---if your spending more time doing that –than you are in praying—that’s probably not a good sign

But no matter where you’re at right now---this can be an opportunity to grow in faith—to surrender to God—to seek to be a light shining in the darkness of this moment

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So in the midst of this pandemic—let’s make this an opportunity to grow in faith—*because God is working in our world*—**let’s not be blind to that**

 Let’s make this an opportunity to surrender to God

And let’s truly allow this to be a time where the light of Christ can shine through us to bring His light to the darkness of our world---Amen? Amen