

**Staying Connected to Jesus in these times of Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Pandemic – The Samaritan Woman’s Example.**

Reflection From A Priest

Scriptural Text: John 4:14-15, 23-24

By Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Subaar

The woman said to Jesus, “Sir, give me this water, that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.” (John 4:15)

All believers throughout the world would get thirsty and hungry for the Word of God and true worship as there is month-long ban on public gathering including Church Services. It seems to me the story of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman we heard just last Sunday 3rd Sunday of Lent was a prophecy text forewarning us of what was bound to happen. Reflecting on these past happenings and struggles and challenges in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, the requests of the Samaritan Woman to Jesus comes to my mind. She earnestly begged Jesus to give her living water so that she will not be thirsty again and have to keep coming to the well to be drawing water again.

The response of this woman shows that she misunderstood Jesus’ promise of living water to quench our various thirsts and hungers. She literally took it to mean physical waters and physical wells. Though her response indicates she misunderstood Jesus, but I think it was a response of faith in Jesus Christ. A response that shows she believed Jesus to be the answer to the turbulence,

challenges and instabilities in her life. She believed Jesus to be the spiritual well, the source of spiritual water and that she would not need to keep coming to the physical source of water, which is the well, and requested for this living water.

My dear brothers and sisters, this is a challenging time for millions of Christians all over the world in the midst of the spread of COVID–19. Within this month-long ban on church services, most bishops all over the world have dispensed all Catholics from the Sunday and Holy Days obligation which is the first precept of the Catholic Church. We are also dispensed from celebrating daily masses and other spiritual devotions that involves public gathering.

In the course of these times, we will certainly be hungry for the word of God, hungry to receive Holy Communion and the sacraments. Like the Samaritan woman, we will certainly be hungry and miss the times that we gather in church as people of God to worship and participate in the Eucharist. Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24).

This is a prophecy of Jesus relevant to us today, as we are no longer worshipping together in the Church, which is the holy mountain of God, for the time being. This is the time our faith is tested to see whether we are true worshippers who worship God in spirit and in truth. Even though we may not keep coming to church as we

used to do, Jesus will certainly not abandon us, he will provide us with the living water that will sustain us throughout these periods.

Jesus confronted the Samaritan woman about her sin and comforted her with the truth of the gospel. In like manner Jesus, through his priests and ministers of the gospel, Jesus will keep confronting us about our sins, especially as Lent is still not over. We will keep reminding you that the Sacrament of Penance is still available for individuals in need. Visitations to the Sick in the form of Anointing or Communion to the sick are still available. We the priests have the divine mandate to comfort you with the truths of the gospel as intentional disciples. We are still available to assist you parishioners in your spiritual growth.

On weekends, the church will be opened at some times for those parishioners who would want to come and spend a few moments in prayer. The church will be opened on Saturday, March 21st from 2pm to 6pm and on Sunday, March 22nd from 9am to 4pm. We your priests and ministers will still take every precaution in our encounter with penitents, the sick and individuals seeking spiritual growths. We still advise that during your visitations to the church, we still make sure we do not have more than ten people in the church at the same time.

Though you might not be physically present in the church and parish, I will keep posting my reflections or my private homilies to you which I believe will help in your prayer life and your connectedness to Jesus. We may not be coming to church for now, but let us like the Samaritan woman ask Jesus to give us his new and

living water that he has brought into the world to protect us from Coronavirus and sustain us for the rest of the Journey through Lent.

On behalf of the parishes of Immaculate Conception and St Bernadette, I wish you well and please, never hesitate to ask your priests or ministers if you need spiritual help. I am confident that we will get through these challenging times together in Jesus' name. God bless you all.