



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today's Gospel is about the man born blind. Can you believe it? Jesus heals a man who had never been able to see. Even if we had the technology to give sight to a person blind from birth, it would take a long time for his brain to be able to register and recognize what the inputs were (if his brain ever could figure them out). Here, Jesus not only heals the eyes, He allows the man's brain to understand what he sees!

Jesus is *the* Healer. He created us in love, and recreated us in the Sacrament of Baptism. He has an eternal plan for you and for me... He wants to be with us forever! That's how much He loves us!

As we continue to deal with the effects of COVID-19, I have heard of so much panic and alarm. While I want to assure you that I'm not condoning an "Ignore it and it will go away" mentality (please do wash hands, avoid touching your face, if you're sick or high risk, stay away), I also want to remind us that God **is** in charge! Jesus is the Healer.

I've shared the Surrender Novena before, and I think it's a good thing to remember, "Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything." He really is in charge of our lives. Have we given in to fear? Remember, the Coronavirus CANNOT kill you... not eternally. Only sin can kill *you*. Remember Jesus' words, "**do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul**" (Matthew 10:28). Jesus tells us not to be afraid. Do we believe Him? Do we really believe that we are eternal beings, or are we focused only on this life?

Do we *really* trust Jesus' love for us, or are we paralyzed by fear? A couple of weeks ago, I shared a song in my homily – "No Longer Slaves" (to listen or re-listen, go to the link on our website www.stpatricks-pelham.com/fr-von-derosias-homilies/, or directly to YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IO0ackX4n04&feature=youtu.be). The key words of the refrain are "I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God." So many people came up to me after Mass and told me how it touched them, how they needed to hear this message. But do we continue to live this message? You are God's daughter, His son. You are beloved to Him. Really! If you give yourself over to Him ("Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything"), He will take care of you. He wants to set us free from the slavery to fear (because we are His children), but we have to let Him take the fear from our hands, we have to give Him permission to be in charge of our lives. Everything comes to us either from Him or through His hands. And His hands are powerful hands, hands of love. In His hands, we find peace.

And He comes to us in *our* hands. His very presence is there in the Eucharist! He is here!!! He is our peace! The Healer is *here* in Adoration, at Mass, in the Tabernacle. Jesus, the Healer, comes among us! He longs for union with you, with me.

In a letter to the priests this past Monday, Bishop Libasci reminded us:

We are, as St. John Paul II declared in his Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, the Church of the Eucharist. It is in the Eucharist that we experience Jesus Christ accompanying us with deepest compassion and imparting the most powerful graces. It is in the Eucharist that the Church throughout the world is fortified to face the struggles of life and the frailty of humanity, not alone, but remembering the words, "Though I walk through the valley of darkness I fear no evil, for you are there with your rod and your staff to give me courage." The Eucharist is our very identity.

I encourage you to take courage in the love of Jesus. He longs for you ... let Him teach you longing for Him. I encourage you, come to Jesus! He is the answer to every problem and every trouble. He is the One who fills our emptiness. And He is the one who heals us of our infirmities.