



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

So much has happened in the past week. Last week, I wrote my article on Monday (as I am doing now), and each day brought news about the Coronavirus, as well as the cessation of public Masses in New Hampshire and across the United States. Who knows what this week will bring?

That being said, there are some truths that don't change, and we can cling to these. One is the truth that **Jesus has power even over death**. This weekend's Gospel speaks of it with the raising of Lazarus. After four days of being dead, Jesus raises him to new life. This is a sign to Jesus' disciples – and us – that if we stay close to Jesus, we have nothing to fear. Yes, there may be suffering. Yes, there may be sickness, and even death (Jesus Himself underwent the most tortuous death), yet *death does NOT have*

the final word! Jesus conquers death, sickness, sin, suffering by His Resurrection.

As we look at the state of the world today, we, obviously, need to be cautious about how we interact. We have to wash hands often and well (and use lots of moisturizer!), and sterilize what we touch. But we need to remember that *our God saves*. We were made for more and the best is yet to come! We don't need to fear death, for death is NOT the end, but only a transition into the eternal.

What we do need to do, however, is make sure that we go on to *eternal life*, NOT eternal death. This is an opportunity to grow in holiness. This can be a wake-up call to us from God. Will we spend the time we need getting closer to God? As my seminary professor (now) Bishop Robert Barron told us, "Don't just do something, *sit there!*" God is calling us to deeper prayer in this time.

There are so many resources out there to help us. Maybe you have one of those books we gave out at Christmas or Easter and it's just been sitting on the shelf. This is a great time to read it. Remember all of the incredible options for prayer through the **media**. While the obligation for Sunday Mass has been lifted, I strongly encourage you to watch Mass. Maybe that can be part of your family time on Sunday. There's Catholic TV, EWTN, and many priest who livestream Mass online (as of this moment, I haven't figured that out, though someone did livestream the 10:30AM Adoration last Sunday).

I have picked up my social media presence. I'm now recording my daily homilies (not just weekends; by the way, you can hear all of my weekend homilies, from 2013 on, by going to our website's "QUICK LINKS" and clicking on "FR. VON'S HOMILIES"). I have also started sharing other thoughts on Facebook and Instagram (find me under "Volney DeRosia"). Be sure to check out the Parish's Facebook site, too.

Other ways of growing in the faith while at home: FORMED.org. If you want to sign up through our parish, go to Pelham.formed.org. There are great Catholic movies, e-books, listening, and teachings. Other great resources are Bishop Barron's site: wordonfire.org; crusade.live; and Ascension Presents (on YouTube), just to name a few. I personally love Fr. Francis Martin's (God rest his soul) homilies online: thewordproclaimed.org/daily-reflections.

Maybe you don't need any of these resources. That's okay. But what is most important is that you take this time to grow closer to God. Take time in silence... away from all the screens! Take time listening to God through His Word (the Bible), and in your own heart. Take time to marvel at God's creation. God is still moving. He loves you deeply, and wants your love in return.

The temptation is always "I'll do this later." We can't get holy tomorrow... only in the moment we have right now. Take the time to enter more deeply into relationship with God, today! If we do this, then this time will not be wasted, but will bear GREAT FRUIT!

With much love from your father,

Fr. Von