

Dear Parishioners, Guests and Friends,

Our churches, communities and nation are embroiled in a number of crises, all coming together at the same time: political turmoil, social unrest and a world wide health pandemic that so far has claimed over 152,000 Americans lives, not counting the many other nameless victims throughout the world. Consequently, many of us are afraid, especially our seniors who feel isolated and vulnerable. St. Peter Chrysologus, whose memorial we celebrated last Thursday, died in 450 AD and made an observation that sounds very much applicable to our own time, “Christ sent His fisherman-Peter, Andrew, James and John into the sea of this world. It was a sea swelling with its vain display, proud of it's confusion, stormy because of factions, fluctuating through uncertainly, noisy with grievances, roaring with anger, shipwrecked by sins and sunk into impiety”

This state of affairs may tempt us to giving into discouragement, concluding that there is not much we can do. But in contrast, we try to work at what St. Paul taught in Ephesians, chapter 4: 31-32, “Get rid of all bitterness, all passion and anger, harsh words, slander and malice of every kind. In place of these, be kind to one another, compassionate and mutually forgiving just as God has forgiven you in Christ.”

I write to express my appreciation to all of you for observing all the health precautions you have embraced when coming to church these last few weeks. The many small changes we've implemented may not be the most comfortable and even a bit bizarre (for example-running out of church right after communion and returning to cars). I've noticed that all of you have made an effort to comply, keeping yourself and everyone else safe while attending Mass. Remember, that being considerate for the health of others is an act of charity, not an overbearing restriction, while we still need to pray for God's guidance in helping us find an effective vaccine very soon.

There are other ways we can responsibly react. The divisiveness and shallowness of current politics seems to permeate everything. Yet, I encourage you not to consider what is “politically or popularly correct” but to engage your conscience and form your own opinions based on the moral, ethical and religious tenets of your faith.

The vast majority of us may not be inclined to travel to one of our big cities to protest against racism and hatred. However, current events press upon us the need to acknowledge that prejudice is one of the most pernicious and evil sentiments that can take up space in a human heart. Perhaps, it is even more dangerous and life threatening than Covid-19. This time calls us to take a honest look at ourselves and examine our hearts and minds, acknowledging our prejudices, honestly owning them and when they surface, make an act of will and throw them out into the gutter where they belong. I suspect that most of us have never sat down with a person of color and asked them, “Tell me, what has it been like for you?” And then, sit quietly and LISTEN. If you want to really begin this process of understanding, I strongly suggest that you take some time to read and study Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s LETTER FROM A BERMINHAM JAIL. It is an eye opener.

My faith in my Lord and Master has always been my personal source of hope. I hope you can find in Him the same. Recall the hope filled ending of our Creed, “I look forward to the Resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.” Let's us share that hope, be conscionable citizens, take all the necessary steps to keep yourself and others safe and look inwards, asking God's light to see the presence and likeness of God within every single person.

Fr. Mick McCullough