

HOMILY: FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT CYCLE A MARCH 22, 2020

Good morning to all of you who are watching and praying with us today! Wherever you are, in your home-----sitting around the dinner table, on the couch, or in your car. Wherever you are, good morning!

Today is the Fourth Sunday of Lent and our journey continues: FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM! From darkness and isolation to light and freedom, from despair to hope and from fear to courage, and from doubt to faith.

Remember the song in the 1970's? I was still very young at that time. The song was, YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE! Remember that song. "And you light up my life, you give me hope to carry on. You light up my days and fill my heart with song!"

Knowing our unhappiness in the midst of plenty, aware of our natural ability to love only ourselves, knowing our tendency to self-destruct, seeing our blindness to the responsibilities and realities of life, loving darkness rather than light, God sent Jesus, his Son, the LIGHT OF THE WORLD!

This is how I see Jesus. This is how experience Jesus. As the song says, He really gives hope!

In the gospel today, we have a man born blind. And you know that being blind is not the easiest thing in the world. With him being, his life was very limited, always depending on someone, his family. He became a burden to his family. As he grew older he began to feel his family's resentment of him.

It must be hard to live in darkness and isolation. And it must be also extremely difficult to live a life without meaning, without knowing the answer to the ultimate question: Where am I going from here? One day he made a decision to go away!

He went away not knowing what to do and where to go. But despite everything, he made his way into the city----- becoming a beggar!

But he believed in God and that one day he will see. And that day came when he encountered Jesus, the light of the world. Jesus said in the gospel today, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world!" He did not say "I will be the light of the world" but he said "I am the light of the world." For the blind man, his life changed when Jesus came into his life!

My friends, because of the Corona virus, our life has been in the darkness. On Wednesday our governor declared the whole state of California in total lockdown. There are more cases and more deaths. The numbers are growing. Our life has been challenged and our faith has been tested! For many

days now we have been in darkness and isolation with different reactions and emotions.

Yes we are locked down but not locked out!

We are not locked out! Our faith allows us to come together during this time-----not locked out from each other----- but able to share and to connect with each through the gift of the Eucharist. We are really one community of faith! We are one Body of Christ and together we celebrate wherever we are.

Our life must go on! Probably this is a good opportunity for us to do something we have not done before. More family time, quality time for husband and wife, more time with your children. I said your children because I don't have any.

Remember, we always say, I don't have time!" Now we have time! No more excuse!

The other day someone said to me that for the first time they were able to have dinner together as family. Also during this time we can do something life-giving and transforming. Like calling someone and offering to do the grocery for them. Instead of being miserable and doing nothing, we can be productive. Maybe we have now time to clean our crowded garage and even find ourselves walking and jogging-----exercising. More time to pray together as family. Remember, Church begins in our home! It is true that many of your activities (birthday celebrations, vacations, baby shower,

etc.) have been cancelled, but please **DO NOT CANCEL GOD!**
Stay with him!

The Pharisees missed every opportunity to be released from their isolation and darkness because of their arrogance and pride. They were blinded by this kind of attitude.

This is what will happen if we don't change our attitude in our life. The blind man was very humble to receive the grace of faith and light.

During this time, we need to be more simple and more humble and more appreciative of this opportunity. Is God telling something? God is re-creating the world through this difficult moment in our life.

Yesterday I heard this story about a man who was driving and upon reaching the checkpoint, he saw not only policemen but also doctors and nurses. In which he said, "I thought it was only a checkpoint. I didn't know it was a check-up as well."

By the way, to all the doctors, nurses and all the caregivers out there, those of you in the frontline, thank you and you are in our prayers. While we are lockdown, you are out there locked in danger, risking your life, to care and to save those infected. Thank you! Our hearts go out to all of you!

We need to step back, a check-up and to stop, look and listen, and a checkpoint to slow us down in our world that is fast and furious! We need to use this opportunity to see through the eyes of faith what God is leading us into.

As the disciples of Jesus were watching in silence, he delivered the blind man from the world of darkness into the world of freedom and light.

By giving the sight to the blind, Jesus was trying to open the eyes of the Pharisees!

May be the Pharisees were not locked down but they were locked out from the grace of God's love and light.

Because of Christ, the light of the world, we can still give hope, empower people through the strength of our faith and God's love!

Live your life! Do not give in to fear and panic! But again, be careful and be responsible.

“Be STILL and KNOW THAT I AM GOD (Psalm 46:10)! God is bigger than this corona virus.

From SLAVERY to FREEDOM, our journey continues. Maybe now! We are all TOGETHER!

Maybe we are lockdown from the world but not locked out from God's love and freedom into the waters of LIFE at EASTER!