

There Is A Way

Suppose you and I are strolling along in the countryside and a stranger starts to stroll with us.

“What are you discussing as you walked along?” he asks, a little too boldly. We stop. We are tempted to admit that we were worrying about the 2020 pandemic. Plus so much else.

One of us—maybe you—says to him, “Are you the only person in the world who does not know what things have happened during these years and these centuries?”

He replies, “What sorts of things?”

You stammer these words, “we had promised to continue Christ’s works, to revere his presence, to preserve his love so it could overflow through us to everyone.” You look away. “But the Church is fragmented. So many bad things are happening.

“Bad things?” the visitor asks.

“Yes,” you say.

A number of our own priests have gone against the very mission they swore to preach. Some have been predators! So few are entering the priesthood now—how are we going to have sacraments when the virus won’t allow us to?

I give you a “calm down” signal, but you go right on, now louder.

We are crucifying Christ all over again! Oh, we were hoping that he would make the whole world come right! What can we do?

Jesus says quietly, “you are slow of heart. Don’t you know it is necessary that Christ should suffer and so bring the world into his glory?”

Silence.

Then you reply.

What do you mean—why should the Christ keep suffering? And worse, why would he let all these horrors happen through the world? This virus, for one thing. And remember Nazi Germany? And Sri Lanka, and Indonesia and Bosnia and Rwanda and Iraq and Afghanistan?

So he begins to tell us the things that referred to him in scripture, beginning with Moses and all the prophets. His voice is calm. He shows how God had long sought a loving relationship with his people, and how they would enter into it for a while but then would turn their backs on him and walk away.

Battles and wars, belief and unbelief, rich versus poor—and worst of all, the sick, the very ones who are aching for love. Is there no way?

He tells us that there is a way the human heart can say Yes to God and mean it.

One human being has done it on behalf of us all, one who is human to the core and yet even so will not stop trusting God—though trapped like the rest of us in mindless suffering and death. As often as you and the others, your brothers and sisters, join with me in human faithfulness and love, the world will be changed.

He walks with us further.

And stays with us. His love is so gently strong that we can always count on it, even if we are sinners. It sends us out to others. It is in fact, God’s love for people.

You have now become calm. So have I. “Maybe the resurrection did happen,” you are whispering so that the stranger cannot hear it. We both nod. We have recognized him. We have seen him in the breaking of the bread.

We see him in the breaking bones of the world.

John Foley, SJ

Third Sunday of Easter

April 26, 2020

St. Stephens Indian Mission

www.saintstephensmission.com

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Blessed Sacrament & St. Josephs

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Sr. Teresa Frawley, OSF.....Past. Asst./Director of Religious Education

Please view the Diocese of Cheyenne website dioceseofcheyenne.org as they have a plethora of information on the Church's response to the coronavirus outbreak. There is also a link to view Sunday Mass celebrated by Bishop Steven. The link is very helpful and provides many, many resources to join in prayer.

Reminder there is no daily Mass, no Sunday Mass, or Adoration and all public meetings (including AA and Bible Study) normally held on the Mission grounds are also suspended until April 30th. The gift shop is also closed. The office is closed to the public as we encourage everyone to stay home. You may call 851-2912 in an emergency otherwise calls to the parish office will be returned as soon as possible. These restrictions are necessary as it is imperative we are responsible and act in solidarity for the common good. Bulletins will be posted to the parish website at www.saintstephensmission.com.

Please remember the church is open for private prayer every day from 8am-7pm. Continue to pray for the end of this pandemic. God Bless!

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Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you Welcome!
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The purpose of St. Stephen’s Indian Mission, the presence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.

Readings April 27th through May 3rd:

Mon: Acts 6:8-15; Ps 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30; Jn 6:22-29
Tue: Acts 7:51-8:1a; ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 7b, 8a, 17, 21ab; Jn 6:30-35
Wed: Acts 8:1b-8; Ps 66:1-3a, 4-7a; Jn 6:35-40
Thur: Acts 8:26-40; Ps 66:8-9, 16-17, 20; Jn 6:44-51
Fri: Acts 9:1-20; Ps 117:1bc, 2; Jn 6:52-59
Sat: Acts 9:31-42; Ps 116:12-17; Jn 6:60-69
Sun: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Ps 23:1-6; 1 Pt 2:20b-25; Jn 10:1-10

Father Jim and Father Hugo are celebrating a PRIVATE Mass every day so the Mass for the scheduled intentions are still being celebrated. Please feel free to call and leave a message if you have an intention. God bless.

Mass Intentions this week

4/25:	Saturday	Intention of the priest
4/26:	Sunday	Hayley Cole
4/27:	Monday	+Deceased Benedictine Monks
4/28:	Tuesday	+Joe & +Mary Job
4/29:	Wednesday	+Lisa Rixen
4/30:	Thursday	Brenda Squires
5/1:	Friday	+Benedict & +Irene Benz
5/2:	Saturday	All cancer patients
5/3:	Sunday	+Brother Llewellyn Kouba, OSB

Christ Is Risen!

Indeed, He Is Risen!

The churches at St. Josephs and St. Stephens are open daily from 8am-7pm for private prayer. No more than 10 people are to be in the church at one time.

Please pray for the four Northern Arapaho Tribal members who recently passed away from complications of COVID-19. Although they were not members of our parish we still remember them and their families in our prayers.

+Alan Jenkins, Sr.
+Gloria Wheeler

+Dawn Wheeler
+Larry Wheeler

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Due to the coronavirus, Shepherds of the Good Shepherd are unable to be in parishes to sell our Olive Wood carvings that support Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. Please consider visiting the following website to purchase a gift for an upcoming First Communion, Confirmation, or other special event. Thank you.
www.shepherdsofthegoodshepherd.org

First published on 3/24/2020

Pope Francis is saying that general absolution of sin — confessing directly to God as opposed to through a priest — applies during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. A Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience, including confession, called the Apostolic Penitentiary, issued a notice Friday, stating that though absolution of sin is the usual means through which sins are forgiven by a priest, in times of "grave necessity," such as now with the ongoing spread of the virus, other solutions are needed, according to Catholic Herald (UK). Confession is considered a sacrament in the Catholic Church.

What qualifies as "grave necessity" has generally been determined by local bishops, the outlet noted; yet in the 1980s and 90s, Rome has urged adherence to stricter definitions.

"This Apostolic Penitentiary holds that, especially in places most impacted by the pandemic contagion and until the phenomenon subsides, there are cases of grave necessity" thus yielding the conditions for general absolution, the notice reads.

In a Mass celebrated Friday that was livestreamed from Rome, Pope Francis said people who cannot manage to go to confession as a result of being locked down because of the coronavirus or another serious issue, can confess directly to God.

"This is the right time, the opportune moment. An act of contrition done well, and our souls will become white like the snow," the pope said.

"Return to your father who is waiting for you," he continued. "The God of tenderness will heal us; He will heal us of the many, many wounds of life and the many ugly things we have done. Each of us has our own!"

In Roman Catholicism, believers are required to confess their sins to a priest in order to be absolved from sin but official teaching allows for exceptions for specific circumstances.

Francis elaborated Friday: "Do what the Catechism (of the Catholic Church) says. It is very clear: If you cannot find a priest to confess to, speak directly with God, your Father, and tell Him the truth. Say, 'Lord, I did this, this, this. Forgive me,' and ask for pardon with all your heart."

"As the catechism teaches," he said, "you can draw near to God's forgiveness without having a priest at hand. Think about it. This is the moment."

Although some Protestant evangelicals practice the discipline of confessing sin to one another — as is instructed in James 5:16 — it is often done so in a less formalized manner and is often not understood as a sacramental rite. A key theological objection of the Protestant Reformation centered around the abuse of the sacrament, namely that the Roman Catholic Church was using the confessional as a means to control the masses. The Reformers contended that it is unnecessary to confess sin through a human intermediary in order to receive forgiveness from or have access to God.

The New International Version of James 5:16 reads:

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."