

APRIL 2020

Impact

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

Impact this month

As this issue of Impact goes to publication, many dioceses have suspended public liturgies in response to the Covid-19 coronavirus.

Even when we are not able to gather for Mass, we may reflect on the readings and allow Christ to speak to us through them. We see in Christ's life, passion, death, and resurrection the contours of our own lives, the small moments and the consequential ones, and in this, we find great hope. Nothing is beyond the powerful love of God poured out to us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now more than ever, the weary world needs to hear the good news of God's love for us in Christ! How will you serve others in this time of social distancing? For whom are you called to sacrifice? How might you share the hope of the resurrection, even in this time of uncertainty?

Good news for the weary

We all get weary. Tired of the constant rush of life, work, responsibilities, the unending pursuit of something more or better. It isn't only the day-to-day things that wear us out. Our lives are often complicated by difficult relationships, illness, grief, and loneliness. And then there are moments that are beyond our capacity to comprehend, such as the virus that has gripped the world in concern and disrupted the lives of everyone on the planet. No one is exempt from the weariness and anxiety that often marks the human experience.

God breaks in

Through Jesus Christ, God breaks in to our weariness, rousing us with the certainty of God's love and the promise of new life. Even though many of us cannot physically participate in the liturgies of the Triduum – Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter – we may reflect deeply on the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Our prayer and reflection at this time is potentially life-changing for us and shows us how to rouse the weary ones in our lives with the good news of the Lord.

Serve Others

On the night before he died, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and commands us to do the same. When we are tempted to glamorize the washing of feet, we should remember that it is a profoundly messy, dirty form of service, and in Jesus' time would have been carried out by those who were considered the lowest in social

standing. When we selflessly serve others, we share the good news of God's tender care for all.

Sacrifice

Incomprehensible as it is, in accepting death on the cross, Jesus sacrificed his life so that we might never again be separated from God. We are often called to reach out with compassion, to sacrifice for those we love and those who are in need. By selflessly giving our time, attention, care, and financial support, we bear the good news of God's undying love.

The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them.

Share Hope

Have you ever been carried away by the excitement of a friend, a child, someone who is so overjoyed they cannot contain themselves?

Are you weary? Be filled with the hope of the Lord! As you ponder the good news of Christ's resurrection, let yourself be roused by the incredible love of God, poured out for us in Jesus Christ.

Are those around you weary? Share the impact of faith through your actions and words, in small ways and in substantial ones. Speak a word that will rouse the weary, the Word who is Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Faith 2020

Imagine for a moment that you have been taken back in time, and have been invited to share a meal with the earliest of Christian communities. The people gather, listen to the apostles as they recount their experiences of journeying with Jesus, hear the sorrow in their voices as they tell of that horrible day when Jesus was crucified and their astonishment at the news of Jesus' resurrection. As they break bread, they remember Jesus' words at his last supper with them, when he commanded them to "do this in remembrance of me." They share how even now, they do not fully understand all Jesus said and did, and yet, they realize they are responsible for drawing others into the way that the Lord taught them, God's way of life and love.

While we cannot go back in time, we can take the witness of the apostles to heart, hear the good news of Jesus Christ as though we are hearing it for the first time, open our hearts to his love and message, and grasp more fully our responsibility to share the story with others. We, too, can devote ourselves to the apostles' teaching, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers. We, too, may be filled with awe at the wonders and signs of God's love that surround us. We may remind ourselves to be filled with gratitude, to praise God and so move others to answer the call to live as disciples and grow as good stewards, just as the first communities of believers did.

Inspired by the early community of believers

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47 NRSV)

Jesus walks with us no matter how rocky the path might be.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus were deeply saddened by Jesus' crucifixion. It was as though their hopes had been killed on the cross. They could not bear to remain in Jerusalem. And as they walked, they came upon Jesus. As often happens in the Gospels, Jesus sought them out. Jesus showed them the meaning of his life, passion, and death, and in their conversation with him, they began to grasp the real meaning of their faith in him.

While still confused and uncertain, they invited him to remain with them. Then, they recognized him in the breaking of the bread. With burning hearts, they hurried back to Jerusalem to share the good news with the other disciples. Their darkness and despair was transformed. Suddenly, they knew the hope of new life.

Like the disciples on the road, we all experience sadness, disappointment, and loss. It is in these moments that we most need to know God's love. At times, we encounter Christ in prayer, especially at Mass, in the breaking of the bread. At other times, we experience God's presence through the care of another. Not only can we place our hope in our Risen Lord, we know that he walks with us, as one who has experienced darkness and death. In his resurrection is our promise of life and light.

