

## On Loan from God

I am planning to write (type, actually) a pastor's letter each week until we get back to having Mass. By the grace of God that will be soon.

I have heard the question several times regarding the corona epidemic, *Do you think this is a punishment from God?* I don't think so: we suffer as a result of our own sins and the sins of others (including the works of the devil), and we never want to attribute evil to God. Yet God's ways are mysterious, and something that appears to us to be evil may not be. For example, when loved ones die we feel terrible pain, but if they are in heaven and we could see their happiness, we might be rejoicing. One of my favorite lines from the Bible is from Isaiah 55: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

More important questions—and easier to answer than figuring out God's ways—are: *What opportunity is this epidemic giving to me? What lessons can I learn or be reminded of?* As I mentioned last week, the opportunity is here for many of us to spend more time in prayer and/or to be kind and patient to those we are confined with.

Regarding what we can learn or be reminded of, there is a lesson that contradicts one of our culture's strongest and saddest beliefs. Our culture says *It's my body, I can do what I want with it*; whereas our faith says *My body is not my own; it belongs to God*. Think of all the practices in our culture that are based on the false belief that my body belongs to me: adultery/fornication, fake marriage, make-believe gender change, abortion, contraception/sterilization, drug/alcohol abuse, gluttony. In St. Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> letter to the Corinthians, we see that the people of that Greek city held similar beliefs 2,000 years ago: *Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor sodomites nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God*. St. Paul went on to explain God's law in regard to our bodies: *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ... Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body*. For St. Paul's full explanation, see 1Corinthians chapter 6: it only takes a couple minutes to read, and shows how far our culture—like that of the ancient Corinthians—has strayed from God.

The belief that *my body belongs to me* is so foolish as to be laughable. I didn't create my body, and I don't get to keep it as long as I want. It is on loan from God. It can be taken from me at any time by the damage of a sudden injury or by the slow process of aging. I can even lose my body to a microscopic virus. Though we all know this, it is easy to forget; the corona epidemic is a harsh reminder.

God loves us and wants what is best for us. Bodily pleasures that contradict God's laws last only for a moment. Following God's laws gains us happiness with Him in heaven forever.

In Christ,

*Fr. Driscoll*

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