

## **“Come to me ... and I will give you rest”**

Matthew 11:28

After having enjoyed a short pause for the celebration of Easter, once again we are facing another lockdown, and our churches are closed to public Mass.

We are invited to follow the celebration of Holy Mass on TV or internet, which is better than nothing, particularly for the sick, the elderly and those who need to isolate themselves.

Some call this situation a “new normal”. Actually, this is the way of exception. Watching Mass as if it were a TV show cannot be considered “normal”. In various eras and places, Catholics have had to suffer the inability to receive Jesus in holy communion whether because of pandemic, or because of persecution.

For whatever reason Mass could not be celebrated with people, Catholics knew that they could not live without the spiritual food for the soul: the Bread of Life, Jesus in the Eucharist.

We are told that at the time of the Roman Empire persecution, Christians would courageously declare “we cannot live without the Eucharist!”

As people today are lining up to receive vaccination, hoping to be immunized and help prevent further spread of the virus, so in the same way Catholics should make arrangements to receive the “spiritual vaccine” that strengthens us against the dangerous virus of “sin” that kills the soul!

We should do all possible to receive Jesus in holy communion with the same zeal, desire and hope which we display towards the vaccine!

This is a time for Catholics to meditate on the teaching of Jesus about HIS BODY being the “true food” and his blood being “true drink”, as found in the Gospel of John, chapter 6:55.

A recent survey among American Catholics, revealed that more than sixty percent do not believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, which means they don’t believe that the bread and wine, consecrated at Mass by the Priest, become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Risen Jesus Christ! (Catechism of the Catholic Church: CCC 1333-1344).

This is tragic! It’s like saying to your doctor that you don’t believe that the prescribed antibiotic will clear your infection, so you just drink simple water instead!

Is it difficult for you to accept the truth of Jesus’ real presence in the Eucharist? Don’t be discouraged. His apostles had the same difficulty as well. But, unlike the people who chose to abandon Jesus, the apostles responded: yes, we cannot understand..., but “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words that give eternal life, and we have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God!” (John 6:67)

It is in times like these that we need to run to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, to be with Him in the Chapel, if possible: He wants to speak to you, encourage you, console you, strengthen you and embrace you!

The invitation to approach Him comes from himself: “COME TO ME, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I WILL GIVE YOU REST” (Matthew 11:28).

In the Book of 2 Chronicles 7:14, the Lord says: “IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME HUMBLE THEMSELVES, PRAY, SEEK MY FACE, AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND HEAL THEIR LAND.”

That is a very simple and clear promise from our God: if we as a country return to God with humble heart, we will be forgiven, and Healing from the Coronavirus will follow!

So, as we follow protocols, obey the Health and Safety Guidelines, and keep physical distance, let us pray for the gift of Faith and that the Lord God may be given once again in our country proper honour and reverence that is due to Him.

AMEN.