

Third Week of Lent - Tuesday

March 17, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Christ on the Mountain,

I am writing to tell you all I love you and you are in my prayers. I had mass for you all this morning. The first reading was from the book of Daniel 3:25, 34-43. It was the account of Azariah prayer after he was thrown into the fire with Daniel by the King who wanted them to bend to his will even if it meant going against the Lord. This prayer meant so much to me at this time of spiritual fasting when we cannot celebrate the Eucharist together. In the midst of the fire Azariah stood up in the fire and prayed:

“For your name’s sake, O Lord, do not deliver us up forever, or make void your covenant. Do not take away your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham, your beloved, Isaac your servant, and Israel your holy one, to whom you promised to multiply their offspring like the stars of heaven, or the sand on the shore of the sea. For we are reduced, O lord, beyond any other nation, brought low everywhere in the world this day because of our sins. We have in our day no prince, prophet or leader, no burnt offering, sacrifice oblation or incense, no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you. But with contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received: As though it were burnt offerings of rams and bullocks, or thousands of fat lambs, let our sacrifice be in your presence today as we follow you unreservedly; for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame. And now we follow you with our whole heart, we fear you and pray to you. Do not let us be put to shame, but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy. Deliver us by your wonders, and bring glory to your name. O Lord.”

Each one of these words spoke to me this morning as if I was hearing the words for the first time. The Word is alive. It is in each one of us and speaks to our experiences for transfiguration and transformation. Maybe we all needed this virus, this pandemic, this plague to get us back to what is important in life. We are experiencing a great fast from the mystical body of Christ, from the Holy Eucharist and from each other. We are being called to have a contrite heart and a humble spirit. We are begging the Lord to receive our fast, our humble contrite hearts. We can choose to follow the Lord, the word made flesh unreservedly. We fear you and pray to you Lord. Deliver us by your wonders and bring glory to your name. I am usually not attracted to the phrase “The fear of the Lord” in scripture and as a name of one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit but now, like you, I am experiencing fear.

Let us pray for each other and long for each other during this extended fast and follow him unreservedly, we will see each other again.

In his peace and strength,

Fr. David Allen