



# MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED!

MAY 03, 2020 / FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

## Spiritual Ponderings:

Corona Virus & the Sacraments - Part I

I had already completed my Spiritual Ponderings for the month of May, when a friend of mine, recommended that I read this article that he forward to me on Facebook. It was called: "Epidemic Danger and Catholic Sacraments" and was written by a theologian named Thomas Joseph White. I felt God asking me to use this article as a stepping off point for my own reflections on what this strange time of "social distancing" means for the Church. Quotes from his article will be in bold and my commentary and reflections will be in normal font. *Thomas Joseph White, O.P., is director of the Thomistic Institute in Rome.*

**As the Church enters a Triduum where a great majority of the faithful lack public access to the sacraments, I'd like to offer some reflections that stand in sharp contrast to those currently being promoted by the editor of *First Things*, my friend Rusty Reno, regarding the current pandemic, civic responsibility, and access to the sacraments. In fact, I take his views to be rather misguided, though well-intentioned, and am grateful for his magnanimity in inviting me to offer an alternative position.**

I found the way that Thomas White began his article awesome in the sense that he begins in a way that shows that he is interested in creating a dialogue and not conflict. I also give Rusty Reno credit for allowing Thomas White to offer an opinion that differs from him in a magazine where he is one of the chief editors. This is how things are supposed to work in the Church. These are two people, who demonstrate that they are trying to offer their thoughts on an issue without beating each other up. There have been many great debates in history of the Church and the only time a person becomes a heretic is when the Church finally declares that an idea is wrong and someone continues to stubbornly hold onto it.

**I realize the issues are fraught, and anyone's view is necessarily subject to a fair amount of fallible prudential judgment. I hope, however, to at least ground my arguments in both Catholic principles and a realistic assessment of our current situation, so as to develop what I think are measured and appropriate positions.**

The preceding quote from Thomas White demonstrates another important part of how to argue in an appropriate way. It shows that he has put a lot of thought into what he is about to say. This does not mean that he is right or wrong but it does show that he is not speaking to hear himself speak or to fill in the silence.

**My first claim is based on a basic given of natural law. The state has a fundamental obligation to protect human life, especially when it is gravely threatened. This obligation is compounded in a time of epidemic if there is a danger of a generalized collapse of the medical system through a rapid and overwhelming influx of new cases of a deadly disease, which COVID-19 certainly is. In a context where the medical system breaks down, deaths from the disease multiply and many other maladies cannot be safely treated. The state, then, has a moral obligation to seek to halt or slow the spread of the disease. In requesting a thoroughgoing but temporary quarantine, governments across the world are following both traditional, time-tested procedure and proven scientific advice. In doing so they are acting in accord with human inclinations to protect life that are both basic and intrinsically good, even ineradicably so, despite the effects of sin on political organizations. Civic governments are wounded by sin, but not radically depraved. They can still pursue and uphold basic natural goods, as they are seeking to do in this case.**

We, Catholics, believe in Divine and Natural Law. Divine Law meaning the Law of God which is manifested in Natural Law – the laws instilled by God into nature when He created the world. According to the principals of Natural Law the state (Civil Government) is supposed to align its laws with Natural Law. This is why we Catholics get so worked up over the fact that abortion is legal.

There is something different between quarantine people in order to save lives and quarantine people because of who they are. Our civil leaders knew that they our medical systems (hospitals, testing, etc.) would be overwhelmed if they did not do something to stop the halt of this disease. They are therefore trying to protect/save lives by asking us to social distance.

**Furthermore, because temporary (two to three months) quarantine measures are the essential key to stemming transmission rates so that societies can learn to deal with this illness more competently, quarantine is also a necessary first step in the restoration of public economic well-being and civic freedoms. Opposing the two (health vs. civic flourishing) is scientifically unrealistic and ethically irresponsible.**

Human beings have a tendency to make it “this thing” verses “this thing” issue. As Jesus said the Devil likes to divide. Human society cannot flourish while so many of its people are dying. At the same time, we must admit that we are in uncharted area for most of us because financial hardships can put people lives at risks also. We must remember that addressing this issue as “us” verses “them” mentality will not help us. Instead if must be a “we are all in together mentality.”



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**May 03 2020 → Fourth Sunday of Easter → Lectionary: 49 → Gospel JN 10:1-10**

Jesus said: “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.” Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them. So Jesus said again, “Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.

A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”

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**Spiritual Reflection:** Jesus’ claim of being the Good Shepherd not only because He goes in search of the Lost Sheep but also because He is the best one to lead us to the pastures of eternal life.

### **Spiritual Questions**

1. What does Jesus as sheep gate mean to you today?
2. Are you living your Christian life in abundance? How?
3. The Lord is my shepherd: is there anything you lack?
4. How is Jesus a shepherd and a lamb to you?
5. Would you let you in pass the sheep gate if you were Jesus?



**Sunday**

## *Thought of the Day*

The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white Host. - Fulton J. Sheen

- Monday** The Blessed Eucharist is the perfect Sacrament of the Lord's Passion, since It contains Christ Himself and his Passion. - Thomas Aquinas
- Tuesday** When you approach the tabernacle remember that he has been waiting for you for twenty centuries. - Josemaria Escriva
- Wednesday** Out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament ... There you will find romance, glory, honor, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves upon earth. - J. R. R. Tolkien
- Thursday** When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you. When you look at the Sacred Host you understand how much Jesus loves you now. This is why you should ask your parish priest to have perpetual adoration in your parish. I beg the Blessed Mother to touch the hearts of all parish priests that they may have perpetual Eucharistic adoration in their parishes, and that it may spread throughout the entire world - Mother Teresa
- Friday** By our little acts of charity practiced in the shade we convert souls far away, we help missionaries, we win for them abundant alms; and by that means build actual dwellings spiritual and material for our Eucharistic Lord. - Therese of Lisieux
- Saturday** In the Eucharistic Sacrifice the Church venerates the memory of Mary the ever Virgin Mother of God and the memory of Saint Joseph, because he fed Him whom the faithful must eat as the Bread of Life - Pope John Paul II

## PRO-LIFE



April 2020

We pray to you Lord who loves justice and righteousness may be the strength and guiding light of world leaders so all life may be considered sacred and all people may walk in the ways of life and peace. We implore you Lord.

For all who have given into the temptation and doubt that the Lord may strengthen them and may enable us to assist them as they face the trials of their faith journey. May they come to know the Lord's mercy. - Amen



## St. Monica Society

*Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.*

## Catholic Prayers

### I believe in the Eucharist Prayer

I believe in God the Father Almighty.  
 I believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ.  
 I believe in God the Holy Spirit.  
 I believe in the Holy Trinity.

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus

in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus

in the Body of Christ, the Consecrated Bread.

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus

in the Blood of Christ, the Consecrated Wine.

I believe that Jesus instituted the One, Holy, Catholic  
and Apostolic Church as His dwelling Home on earth.

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus

in the Sacred Tabernacles of the Catholic Church.

I believe that Jesus is truly present physically among us,  
over and above being spiritually present within us.

May this truth be known to all for the glory of God.

Amen..



## Humor

### One-Liners

1. I always wanted to be somebody, but I guess I should have been more specific.
2. I'm reading this great book on anti-gravity – I cannot put it down.