

## Message from the Rector

Dear People of God,

**Choose - Peace over Panic. Faith over Fear. Wisdom over Worry.**

We are living in difficult times. Our lives and world have been turned upside down. We are afraid. We are fighting an “enemy” we cannot see. However, with the help and grace of God, this too shall pass. How does our present situation connect with this weekend’s Gospel on this Fifth Sunday of Lent?

Little Susie was watching her father the deacon write a homily. “How do you know what to say?” she asked her dad.

“Why, God tells me.”

“Then why do you keep crossing things out?”

There is a story about an old Cherokee chief who is teaching his eight-year-old grandson about life. He tells him, “A fight is going on inside me. It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is angry, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, resentment, fear, panic, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, worry and ego.”

“The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, trust, wisdom, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, forgiveness, compassion and faith.”

“This same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson thought about this for a minute, then turned to his grandfather and asked. “Which wolf will win?”

The wise old chief turned to his grandson, smiled knowingly and replied simply, “**The one you feed.**”

In our relationship with the Lord – What are those areas, those obstacles that may keep us from being the person we want to be? The story of Lazarus raised from the dead is really our story. Our Lord says in this Gospel: “Take away the stone.” On a much deeper level, the command “Take away the stone” really means, take away, that which blocks the coming of the Lord.

What are those areas that block what is really important in living out the Christian life? Which wolf are we feeding at this moment in our lives as we together face COVID-19?

For example, fear or panic can be a stone that blocks the Lord's presence. Fear and panic means we are not free. You are not yourself. The two greatest fears we live with are the fear of failure and the fear of rejection. I would also include the fear of the unknown. However, the Lord says, "Take away the stone." The Lord Jesus is the one who brings us peace.

Hate can block the Lord's presence. If a person is filled with hate or anger – they are not free. About ten years ago, I spoke to a teenage girl who hated her father for leaving home. Unless she is one day able to forgive her father, she will not be free. Hate can own us – hate and an unforgiving heart can keep us from totally loving. Forgiving isn't easy, but hatred can haunt a person. Forgiving doesn't change the past - it changes the future. The Lord says, "Take away the stone." The Lord Jesus is the one who brings us life.

Worry can block the Lord's presence. The attitude, regret for yesterday, and fear for tomorrow can only hinder our relationship with the Lord and others. Worry never helps a situation. However, most of us worry too much – especially now! Are we living in scary times? Absolutely yes! Yet, the Lord says, "Take away the stone." The Lord Jesus is the one who brings us hope.

In our lives, take away that which blocks the coming of the Lord. Pray. Pray. Pray. Trust in the Lord Jesus and all things are possible. I close with this beautiful prayer. Pray individually or as a family each day.

### **A Prayer to Face COVID-19 with Hope and Solidarity**

Dear God,

In this time of uncertainty and fear, help us be love, mercy, and peace for ourselves and for others as we face coronavirus in the United States and around the world.

Help us hold close in our hearts those who have died, and their loved ones who mourn them.

Those who are sick or are trying to seek medical care.

Those who don't have paid sick leave, benefits, or job security.

Those whose schools have closed and don't have access to food, safe homes, or technology.

Those who can't travel to be with loved ones who are ill or dying.

Those who are facing discrimination and harassment because of their ethnicity.

Those who are struggling with loneliness during this time of isolation.

Those who are frightened and losing hope.

Help us find joy, however small it seems.

Help us remain hopeful.

Help us remember that "All shall be well, for there is a force of love moving through the universe that holds us fast and will never let us go."

Amen.

May we always remain in solidarity and prayer helping and supporting each other as best we can.

Walking with you,  
Fr. Greg

### **Humor from the Rector**



“Now that we have everyone  
washing their hands correctly -  
This week we will work on turn signals!”