

LENT 4. HOMILY

Last week I talked about the modern world as a desert
If the world has become a desert it is because human beings have made it so.
Selfishness is at the root of the problem. I talked about how human greed and indifference to others
have undermined our sense of community.

Today's readings focus on the idea of light.
The desert I described last week is also a dark and lonely place.
Where is the light to come from?
Christ told us:
"You are the light of the world....Let your light shine before men."

These last days the media have been relentless in covering the rapid spread of the Coronavirus. In my
view they have certainly made us aware of the dangers, but I think they have also helped to create an
atmosphere of fear and anxiety, even panic in some cases.
I have seen this especially among the elderly and the housebound.
But there have also been glimmers of light in the darkness.

There have been stories from all over the country of people taking the initiative in reaching out to the
elderly and vulnerable. We need to hear more about these things. We need to find some light in this
darkness.

Listen to St Paul:

"You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects
of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth."

In this current situation we are, each of us, called to bring the light of Christ into the surroundings
darkness. At the end of every Mass we are sent out into the world to live out what we have celebrated
in church. Jesus himself made it clear that there are TWO great commandments. We are to love
God, AND our neighbour.
BOTH are central to our lives as Christians.

I would like to suggest that each of us can do something to bring light in the darkness. Perhaps this is
a good time to use the phone to contact people with whom we have lost contact, especially the elderly
and the lonely.

It would be a wonderful side effect of the present health crisis if the antivirus of Christian love were to
contribute to a much needed change in our society.

Many people today are anxious to challenge us to think about our care for the environment. Pope
Francis is an outspoken, perhaps prophetic, voice calling on us to change our attitude to the planet
before it is too late.
It is no less urgent to rethink our attitude to the human environment.

I spoke last week about Pope Paul's description of "The Civilisation of Love".
The present situation gives us an opportunity to make that idea a reality as we become much more
aware of one another.

What can you and I do this coming week to create a more human environment?

St Paul says:4 “Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”
I hope St Paul won’t mind if I add a few words more.
And Christ’s light will shine IN you for others.

“You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord.”
“Let your light shine.”