

## Battlefield Letter Three:

### “The Cry of the Faithful”

Dear Parishioners,

Last Sunday was an unforgettable day in our lives as Catholics. It is still unimaginable that in the blink of the eye the public offering of the Holy Mass has across the entire nation and in many other parts of the world been suspended.

What is the spirit that has brought this upon us? Has God in His inscrutable Providence sent us a message?

Is this the great chastisement we have merited for our collective and personal sins? The open and flagrant disregard of the Commandments, the toleration and even embrace of sin that has become grafted into our societal structures must somehow factor into the equation of the collapse of normalcy.

Pope St. John Paul II prophetically and eloquently laid out the terms of the great spiritual contest of our age, viz., that raging between the Culture of Death and the Gospel of Life. How can we not place a worldwide plague within this context?

And the Church, with her long memory is not a stranger to plagues. They seem to come historically after periods when God’s people have forgotten true worship and have fallen into the various forms of idolatry.

Pope St. Paul VI once said that the Church is “an expert in humanity.” She knows well of what man is made and understands with an unparalleled spiritual insight that no such thing can occur merely in the physical order. And she has proven to history her indefectibility, i.e., her everlasting resilience and capacity to heal.

Yet as the classic axiom goes, she is “semper reformanda,” i.e., always reforming. And this not in her doctrine, which is eternally true and perpetually articulated with deeper clarity. Rather, the people of God, every generation, is in need of evangelization and a fresh embrace of the Jesus Christ, Who is the Sole Mediator between God and man.

There seem to be two classes of Christian sinners: the first does not deny the Truth in word, solely in a failure to conform it. The second, as the Pope Pius XII so well said, “has lost the sense of sin.” The former can be reformed by God’s Mercy, the latter must be scourged with His Justice.

I believe in my heart that our little country parish shone last Sunday. The pain which you have felt at being cut off from the Holy Eucharist is remarkable and stirring. The fact that I have seen so many of you sitting in our churches pleading mercy in the quiet stillness is most telling. Some have spent hours and hours seeking to stay close to the Eucharistic Lord.

On Sunday we experienced the spectacle of hundreds and hundreds of viewers on our livestreamed Masses at St. Elizabeth's and St. Anthony's (even more than attend on Sunday!). There were even some who, albeit locked out of the buildings, still came to wait outside at the time the Masses were being filmed. Some even knelt before the church doors in a gesture of devotion that would bring tears to one's eyes.

I am proud of you, dear faithful parishioners! And I consider it a blessing upon me to have become your pastor. You gave me a gift on Sunday with your witness that is precious and unforgettable.

But as we pray for an end to this modern terror, we must not long for a return to the way it was before. Rather, we must open our minds and hearts to God's Voice and realize that when the scourge passes, we must emerge better and stronger and more determined than ever to Christianize our world.

The nefarious virus, with all the sorrows and lamenting that it is heaping upon its poor victims, with the threatening and attendant evils of anxiety and fear of social discord and a new era of poverty and loss of freedom, can be defeated.

But we must not just survive physically and economically. We must leave an example to posterity that even though this is a "wicked and perverse generation," still there were to be found the "Christifidelis laici," the faithful Christians. For we trembled at the loss of the Mass and clung ever more boldly to the blessed Cross, which is the true axis of the world.

Let the victory over Satan's attack be won through the powerful intercession of the Queen of Heaven and Earth, through Blessed Mary, Health of the Sick.

May her Divine Son heal us who are afflicted in body and blind of heart. Let the Church arise and shine forth in her native splendor and might!

God love you, dear parishioners, for your steadfastness and goodness!

Father Francis de Rosa  
Pastor

Parce Domine, parce populo Tuo, ne in aeternum irascaris nobis!

Spare us O Lord, and do not remember our sins forever!

