

April 28, 2020-Reflections for the Easter Season Ms. Albano

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Dear God, I acknowledge the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation for being the ongoing stewards of this traditional territory.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

“While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he died.”

The story of Father Giuseppe Berardelli giving up his ventilator in Italy circulated late last month. Perhaps, you heard about the Kansas farmer who had five N-95 masks to protect his family. Members who are auto-immune compromised. But, he sends one to Gov. Cuomo to give for a doctor or nurse to use in New York City. These are beautiful stories of self sacrifice to aid a stranger. I am sure there are and will be other countless stories of self sacrifice as we fight COVID-19, such as staying at home to help our front line health workers and essential services do their job in keeping us healthy and fed. Yet, as days stretch to weeks, and weeks to months, we will become restless. Some of us will also feel resentful or bitter towards the whole situation. Consider how some of our southern neighbours or within our own neighbourhoods refuse to self-isolate.



However, in the Gospel today, we hear another way to answer our restlessness in the story of St. Stephen. St. Stephen was a deacon of the Church and is the first martyr of the faith. In him, we see a person of faith who heard the stories of Christ and witnessed the Apostle's work, which inspired him to profess the faith, especially in his last breath. As they stone him to death for being a disciple of Christ, he looks at his accusers and forgives them. Justifiably, St. Stephen should be angry, but he doesn't let anger consume him because he knows that God is with him. As they stone him, the heavens part and he can see Christ guiding him home. Here, he bears witness that there is nothing to fear. In faith he embraces the hardships, trusts in God, and forgives his persecutors. From St. Stephen we learn how to deal with life's misfortunes in humility and strength, not in anger or bitterness.

I pray for those who are feeling frustrated and bitter for having unfulfilled or deferred plans. I hope you find the patience and grace of St. Stephen. May you see that God has given you time to enjoy and appreciate what is important. May those who must endure job loss or a reduced salary find help in their neighbour and trust that all will be well. Let us pray for those who can help, may they donate either time or resources to those who do not have enough to take care of themselves. In this way, we will come to know the grace of God and why and how St. Stephen could trust in Christ's love. May we profess and bear witness to the words of Jesus at the Ascension, "Remember I am with you always till the end of days." Amen. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.