

Dear Leominster Church Family

Letter #4

Greetings once again from my tiny yellow walled office adorned with pictures of Pam, Harry Anderson and Norman Rockwell, (in order of importance.) Things have been happening within these four walls I never would have imagined would be happening just a few short weeks ago. In January, if you mentioned the word “**Zoom,**” to me, the first thing coming to my mind would have been a picture of my 8 year old self, racing a collection of matchbox cars and exclaiming “**Zoom!**” But now, I’m attending meetings and teaching classes on line with this amazing computer technology, to which can fittingly be said, “You can’t live with it, but you can’t live without it.”

There’s been some stress in the Gagnon household this week. We got the news early in the week that my baby brother, who’s 56, came down with Covid-19. I had just that very day been thanking the Lord there had been no one in our family that had succumbed to this horrid virus, but then, there it was. Brother Johnny is a retired Major in the U. S. Army and was a tank commander in the first wave of troops to enter Iraq in Operation Desert Storm. Realizing from watching the news that this virus has no respect for any age or health condition, I felt I had to, in some small way, prepare my heart for what might possibly come. But in the meantime, we prayed and we called others to pray, and praise God, he appears to have come through the worst of it. Maybe there are some of you who are connected to someone, a relative, friend or acquaintance who has this terrible virus, or who may be struggling with other afflictions, while not so deadly, can be just as debilitating..oppressing anxiety, gnawing depression or unrelenting fear.

Certainly, we can hope that new treatments like hydroxychloroquine or some other treatment will come forward to help diminish the awful consequences of this global pandemic. Unfortunately, for the afflictions I just mentioned, there is nothing at CVS or Amazon.com that can cure these things, which are in reality, as much as a pandemic as the Corona virus. But thank the Lord, in the pages of a divinely inspired Book, the eternal Word of the Living God, we have offered to us, as the song goes, “words of life, words of hope,” that “give us strength, help us cope.” Words that have stood the test of time, that have seen millions through the darkest times in human history. How? Because “The entrance of thy words giveth light,” Psalm 119:130. When that Light is allowed to shine into the hidden

chambers of the human heart, through the measure of faith granted freely to every person, it has power to dispel anxiety, to beat back depression and to calm the stormy waters of our fear.

Friends, this weekend, most of the Christian world will be remembering the last scenes of the life of Jesus. They will be hearing the story retold of His passion, His sufferings, His agony and His death. And while they may not comprehend the difference between the first death, (a sleep) and the second death, (eternal separation from God which is what the death of the cross really was), you can be sure, the Holy Spirit will be present to those honest seekers who are wistfully looking to heaven for answers as to what is going on in this fragile world. His grace will be poured out, His compassionate hand extended. Even if they've never opened a Bible, they have come to realize in these last few weeks that the world we live in offers no lasting hope. They may be looking forward to getting some financial help from a city named after the Father of our country, but God's sweet Spirit will be working that they might sense that the only real and lasting hope for this world can come from our Father in Heaven.

My prayer for my brothers and sisters in Christ has been that your hope has continued strong and steadfast during these past few weeks. But even if it hasn't, or at times has wavered, may the encouragement found in these words serve to buoy up your spirits....

“The words spoken to the disciples are spoken also to us. The Comforter is ours as well as theirs. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own failures and mistakes. In sorrow and affliction, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone,—these are the times when, in answer to the prayer of faith, the Holy Spirit brings comfort to the heart.” Acts of the Apostles pg. 51

So let's hold fast, perhaps more profoundly this Sabbath than any other Sabbath of the year, to the immortal words of Charles Wesley...

*“Lives again our glorious King...Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Once He died our souls to save...Where's thy victory, O grave?”*

*“Soar we now where Christ hath led...Following our exalted Head,
Made like Him, like Him we rise...Ours the cross, the grave, the skies!*

What else is there to say to this, except...Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***“May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your
faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy
Spirit.” Romans 15:13***

You remain in our hearts....Pastor Mark and Pam