



## YOU (*STILL*) THERE. ME (*STILL*) HERE. GOD (*STILL*) WITH US.

### Fifth Sunday of Lent/29 March Sermon

*“This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” ✠*

Last Sunday, the IV Sunday of Lent/Laetare Sunday, you were there, I was here, and God was with us. During our time together, I spoke of the extraordinary opportunity that God had given us to “return to Him”; not in the absolutely beautiful church of Our Holy Redeemer in Freeport, New York where I know so many of you want to be, not in Saint Agnes in Pennsylvania or Precious Blood in South Carolina, but in the privacy of your own dwelling places!

I spoke too of how glad you were to know that while you could see me, I couldn’t see you; especially since not everyone “out there” was dressed in their Sunday best. Well I have some **April 1<sup>st</sup>** news to tell you: that’s not the case today. With help from the onsite technicians at Our Holy Redeemer, not only can you see me in Freeport, New York, but I can see you in Leesburg (Florida), Bluffton (South Carolina), Glen Cove (New York), Salt Lake City (Utah), and wherever **you** may be. You don’t believe me? Well good; because as I said that’s: “**April 1<sup>st</sup> news/April Fool’s Day** news; or in more popular terms today: it’s **fake news!** What isn’t fake news however is that: *you are there, I am here, and God is with us!*

If today, the V Sunday of Lent, we have a greater awareness of God’s presence with us than we did last Sunday, it is more than likely because of the extraordinary “Urbi et Orbi” Message and Blessing that Pope Francis delivered this past Friday at the Vatican in Italy. “From this place that tells of Peter’s rock-solid faith” he said, “I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world” he continued, “may God’s blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace.” Yes, *out of the depths of his spirit the Pope cried for us: and the Lord’s ears were attentive to his voice in supplication.*

While you there, and me here may have become increasingly aware of God’s Presence, and have returned today to give Him thanks, how many others are seemingly not aware of that Presence, and as such, still refuse to return to Him? Perhaps some of them are with you now; perhaps though, they are in another part of your dwelling place; your apartment; your house. Perhaps they were with you on Ash Wednesday and not only (like us) heard the words “Return to Me”, but like us also, they heard the words that sent us into the Holy Season of Lent: “Repent and believe in the Gospel”; but still they refused to repent; they refused to believe; for them even in these times it is still: “business as usual”.

If on Easter and in Eternity we want to experience the Joy of God's Presence in the Resurrection, we must repent from that "business as usual" approach to living. Many of us repented from it after 9/11, when we returned to our churches, our synagogues, and our temples, and promised our spouses, our parents, our children, our neighbours, – our God – that we would never again take them for granted. And so it happened that America, putting her trust in God, rose from the ashes to journey-united in the *newness of Life* (cf. Romans VI:4) that not only carried us through 9/11, but even now is carrying us through the effects of coronavirus!

Just as our journeys from the house into the world (church, work, ...) and back to the house require that we pull over, rest, refuel, and sometimes even repair, so too it is for our journey from earth to Heaven. Even before man figured out how to make automobiles (or to livestream for that matter), he learned this lesson from his study of creation recorded for us in the Bible-book of Genesis. From that lesson developed our modern work week and the Church's Liturgical calendar where every Season is a season to pull over, rest, refuel, and even repair with **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving**.

All of us this Lent as a result of coronavirus have been forced to pull over. "The worldwide coronavirus pandemic" said the Pope, "is not (however) God's judgment on humanity, but God's call on people to judge what is most important to them and resolve to act accordingly from now on." And so, when the "all clear" is given for you to gather in a group of more than ten people: "where?", "with whom?", and "for what?" will you choose to gather? Your choice (of people, places, and things) will say a lot about what you think is most important; just as **the choice you made to gather for Holy Mass today says a lot about that; a lot about you!**

## "BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD"



### OUR HOLY REDEEMER IS "LIVESTREAMING" SUNDAY MASS

11:30 A.M. English

1:00 P.M. Spanish

Please visit [www.ohrfreeport.org](http://www.ohrfreeport.org) for more details



### ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

by: Saint. Alphonsus de Liguori:

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to receive Thee into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive Thee Sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as if Thee were already there and unite myself wholly to Thee.

Never permit me to be separated from Thee. Amen