



Archbishop of Montreal

Homily
Sunday, March 15, 2020

Third Sunday of Lent - Year A (Jn 4:5-42)

Jesus “strong.” Jesus “weak.”

Are we, you and I, living in uncertainty? Are we worried? Yes! We are definitely living in uncertainty because of the COVID-19 pandemic. What is this virus? What impact does it have – or will it have – on us, on our family, on society? We might also be worried about: Who or what can we trust? Who or what can we rely on? How are we going to pull through?

Does living in uncertainty necessarily mean that we must also feel worried at the same time? Is it possible to live in uncertainty while possessing inner calm?

Is it possible to experience both uncertainty and inner peace?

On the human level, we know what we must do. Follow the appropriate hygiene measures and the various social directives issued by the various levels of governments.

On the interpersonal level, there is the issue of isolation. When we talk about people at risk of contracting the virus due to age, frailty or illness, with it comes the risk of loneliness and feelings of isolation.

How can the sense of isolation be prevented? Perhaps by calling someone every day, calling a person who is known to be alone. It could be someone in your family, a friend, an acquaintance. Calling someone every day so that no one feels isolated; so that no one says, “I am alone.” You are not alone. Combat isolation.

Meet the Lord, pray, meditate. Jesus “weak” is with us in our weakness. He bears our weaknesses. [In today’s Gospel] Jesus is tired as he approaches the well and sits, entering into dialogue with the Samaritan woman. Jesus draws close to our weaknesses. In prayer, offer your weakness to Jesus. Jesus is weak insofar as he draws close to us in our weakness, bearing it.

But Jesus is also strong. He is strong in his divine life, in his love for us and the grace he gives us. Jesus “strong” has the power to calm our hearts.

Jesus, we offer our worries, anxieties and inner turmoil to you. We offer our weakness to you. Calm our hearts so that we can live together in solidarity, respond to people who are in isolation and to those who are afflicted with illness, so that we can live with compassion. Calm our hearts, so that we may also be instruments of your peace.

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