

April 9, 2020

Dear Friends,

I have mentioned that I, and others, are feeling a spiritual connection during this time of Corona isolation, and so I don't think it's a coincidence that this is Holy Week for Christians and the feasts of Passover and Easter are about to be celebrated among Jews and Christians throughout the world. Today Christians celebrate Holy Thursday or Maundy Thursday, which is a feast which ironically is about washing, not hands, but feet. Ancient people had to be very careful about contagions and pathogens that they did not understand, thus most ancient religions have all kinds of sacred ablutions or washings. Part of why these rituals began in the first place was more than basic hygiene or even a matter of pleasing God, but rather a matter of life and death, which we are learning today is still of utmost importance. Although these holy days are a time when people are focused on washing the soul, it has become of paramount importance that we wash our bodies and especially our hands in order to survive. The washing of feet was symbolic of service and humility. I can't help but to think of all of our devoted and dedicated healthcare workers who are on the front lines of this crisis, risking their lives for complete strangers out of a sense of service and humility. I am also reminded of other heroes who have stepped forth during other health crises in our world and nation. Fr. Mychal Judge, who was the first to die in the 9-11 attacks on the World Trade Center, was a humble and compassionate man. He was a Franciscan priest who served as the chaplain for the FDNY. Long before 9-11 however, when the AIDS virus was killing untold and unreported numbers of gay men in New York City, Father Mike, as he liked to be called, was the only priest who would venture into the quarantined sections of AIDS wards in the few hospitals that would take them. He would simply go from one patient to another and anoint their feet. He would pray with them, bless them and anoint their feet. He said he did this for many reasons: one was that these men had not been touched since their diagnosis. Another was that most of them had been abandoned by their families and seemingly by the whole world. And another was so that he could be a model for them of what Jesus would be doing for them at that moment. For many of those men it was the last human contact they would ever have.

I wish, like in the Book of Exodus, we could paint lamb's blood on our doorposts and the Coronavirus would pass us over, but alas we need to do a bit more. This is a time to be very practical and vigilant about the hygienic methods that are necessary to keep the virus away. But it is also a time to tune in to the spiritual awakening that is taking place. I pray this will awaken humanity, all over the world, of our connection to one another as brothers and sisters, as a human family. I pray it awakens us to service and compassion and tolerance for all our fellow human beings regardless of race, color of skin, creed, language, legal status, sexual orientation, demography, wealth status, or any other stupid reason we humans come up with to hate one another. I pray that all the negative, dark energy that can so consume us is replaced by positive light and love. I pray that this humbles all of us so that we can awaken to what is truly most important in life. With that let me wish you all a blessed Passover, Holy Week and Easter.

Peace and Serenity, Kevin