

During this unprecedented time in our world's history, we offer you the following material for your praying and reflecting on God's Word.

Introduction

Like the women who encounter the risen Christ, we too are often filled with fear. We fear that our proclamation will be rejected and not considered credible, especially in times of prosperity when people feel that they do not need God or in times of desperation and suffering as we are experiencing today with the COVID-19 crisis. With this surprising pandemic, many are fearful of the long-term job loss and are worried about how they will pay their rent, feed their children and meet their responsibilities with diminished financial resources. For some, such as those who are in hospital and long-term care facilities, their fear of isolation is particularly increased when they are told that they cannot receive visitors. Parents are struggling to find ways to explain the crisis of the Coronavirus to their children whose daily routines have been radically changed.

How do we address our fears? How do we console one another during these times? We, like the women who encountered Christ at the tomb, must respond by going forth in joy, confident that it is the Risen Christ who sends us, accompanies us and reassures us. As we experience physical distancing, self-isolation, quarantine and economic uncertainty, we are compelled to find new ways to proclaim the Good News that Christ is Risen. Now more than ever, we must be Easter people who proclaim that Christ is Risen, He has saved us from our sins and He is with us always!

As people of faith, our fear gives way to joy in our daily encounter with Christ in the Eucharist, in Spiritual Communion, in the Scriptures, in our prayer, in devotions such as the Rosary, and in compassionate and loving service to one another. These encounters, even if by social media, provide us with the courage and conviction of our faith so that, even in these most challenging times, we can boldly proclaim the death and resurrection of Christ through our words and actions.

When we address our fears through the eyes of faith, we are freed to bring about authentic and lasting spiritual and social transformation by addressing the injustices around us, but also by discerning the signs of the times, for God's presence is active and saving at each moment of our daily lives.

- Archbishop Richard Gagnon
(excerpt of the Easter message from the CCCB)

Lectio Divina on the Gospel for April 28

Lectio Divina means 'divine reading'. It is a way to pray using the holy scriptures in a step-by-step process.

Gather the entire family around and make the sign of the Cross. Light a candle.

Leader: "Holy Spirit, you inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write what you wanted us to know for the sake of our salvation. Inspire us now to hear those words not only with our ears, but our hearts, so that we might know your saving Word for us today."

- Have one person **read** the scripture slowly, out loud and have a few moments of silence afterwards. (It may be helpful for everyone to have a copy of the reading).
- **Read** the scripture again out loud and choose a single word or short phrase that touches, speaks or surprises you. Share with everyone.
- **Read** the scripture out loud one more time and discuss what is happening directly in the text.
- **Meditate** on what God is doing now in our lives through this text.
- **Respond** to what God is doing through prayer.
- **Contemplate** on what God is asking of me through this text and how to use these words as a gift for others through my actions.
- After a period of silence, end with the Sign of the Cross.

The Holy Gospel for April 28, 2020

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

"So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'

Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir give us this bread always.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Family Activities

We recognize in St. Gianna Beretta Molla, an extraordinary witness to the Gospel.

The everyday moments of one's life lived with Christian charity, faith, love and hope provides witness to family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and others. The witness of Christians, whose lives are filled with the hope of Christ, opens the hearts and minds of those around them to Christ.

For believers, St. Gianna shows us the wisdom of the Gospel and the Church's teachings in at times, difficult aspects of human life. She points us to the cross when matters are confusing and difficult, since the cross always stands clear. It shows the believer the path of LOVE, which is not easy, but which always allows goodness to win.

St. Gianna is also a reminder to the human family. She reminds us of the value of married love, of the dignity of the unborn and of all people, of maternal sacrifice and love, and of the unique role of the family in the midst of the struggles and joys in our world.

We are reminded by the words of St. Gianna's daughter, Gianna Emanuela, 'my mother was a saint first of all because of the way she LIVED, not only because of the way she died.'

It was her entire life that prepared her to make that final choice.

- * What does witnessing to the Gospel look like today?
- * How can you, as a mother, as a father, as a grandparent, as a child, as a sibling witness to the Gospel in your own family and to others?
- * One of St. Gianna's favourite activities was to enjoy nature. Take a walk (or peer out your window) as a family as this earth blooms to life again. Notice and appreciate God's creation.
- * St. Gianna loved writing letters to her husband, Pietro. Write a love letter to someone in your family.