



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP  
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March 13, 2020 - a good Friday in Holy Lent

Dear Brothers and Sisters of West Tennessee:

We have seen the face of chaos and uncertainty before. For my generation, chaos was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Everything in us seemed to have changed by that act of evil. For my parent's generation, World War II and the horrors seen during that global conflagration affected "the greatest generation." For decades before that, the depression and the horrific evil of racism. More recently, in 2001, "9-11" and the evil face of terrorism.

Today's chaos has a different feel. Yes, the world has seen these kinds of pandemics before. I grew up seeing children in iron lungs, as polio took its toll. Before that, great pandemics took thousands of lives with plague upon plague. **But today**, with our 24 hour a day/7 days a week media blanket, we are affected by more than the coronavirus (COVID-19). It seems that we are bombarded with information, and most of us are uncertain of what "news" to believe as "the truth." This constant "breaking news" virtual media-world creates its own kind of chaos and uncertainty.

This is where we are today, on this good Friday during Holy Lent. We are facing the fears of uncertainty, the stress of our loss of being able to plan ahead. We are not in charge. We are not in control. We are tasting a kind of poverty, and that's not a bad thing to experience, as we pray during Holy Lent pondering the call to *metanoia*--to conversion of heart.

Hopefully, our elected officials, on the local, state and federal levels, will wrap their arms around this outbreak and guide us through this COVID-19 uncertainty. The medical and public health professionals will give us their best efforts. They will continue to guide us.

**But for us**, disciples of the Lord Jesus, members of His Body for West Tennessee, let's take this uncertainty, this sense of chaos, this loss of control...this poverty...and turn again to the Lord, who has defeated the enemy of our human nature, the powers of sin and death. Let us turn to Him, our hope, who is our Way, our Truth, and Life itself (John 14.6;16.33).

Stay close to your parish community in prayer. Stay attentive to the guidance of your Pastor. Reach out to those in need, those who suffer and those who need our strength (Matthew 7.12; 25. 31-46). And, know this: that even in these difficult days, I say with Saint Paul...**rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer** (Romans 12.12). I am your brother and your Bishop, trusting in God's goodness,

I remain fraternally yours. In the light and love of the Lord,

+ David P. Talley

Most Reverend David P. Talley, M.S.W., J.C.D.

I will give you a new heart Ezekiel 36:26