

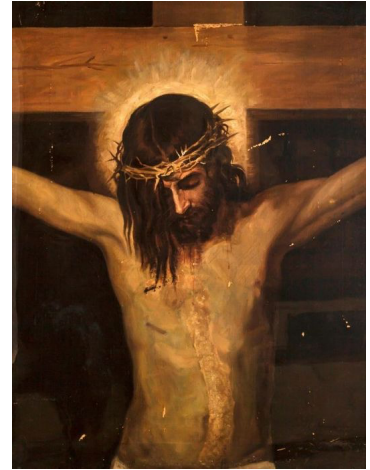
In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Dear God, I acknowledge the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation for being the ongoing stewards of this traditional territory.

*A reading from the Gospel of Matthew*

*And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

To help me cope with these days of isolation, I find myself drawn to searching for articles, stories, and videos on COVID 19. The stories that break my heart are the one's of the frontline health workers. From around the world, health workers have the same story. They watch countless patients die physically alone in their hospital bed while they remain helpless to save their life. From around the world, doctors and nurses are reminding us that we are finite human beings. Despite our best intentions and efforts, we cannot prevent suffering and death in this world.



It is a sobering life lesson which the faithful learn every Passion Sunday. We begin mass with the Gospel reading of Jesus entering Jerusalem. The people scream out, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." They believe Jesus will be the one to free them from Roman rule and bring them salvation. Yet, it is the Sunday where we hear about Christ's suffering and death on the cross. The truth that God so loved the world He gave His only Son. The Beloved who Judas sold for thirty silver pieces and who Peter denied. The faithful realize that we will also suffer death like Christ.

Yet, this truth does not scare us because we see Christ's death on the cross through the eyes of the Resurrection. We see it through the eyes of faith. In Christ's resurrection, we know that human suffering and death never have the final say in our lives. We accept that one day we will suffer and die, but we will never go through those moments alone. In Christ's life, death and resurrection, we learn that death is not the end of our human story. This is the moment where God shows us how we are never alone. On Passion Sunday, we celebrate the unconditional love God has for all His people. A love which screams out to our hearts, you are never alone. Even in death, when you think you're facing the darkness alone, God is with you.

I pray for every COVID 19 patient isolated in their hospital beds without a family member to hold their hand. May you know that God has surrounded you with His angels. May you know that the Mother of God prays for you as Her Son suffers with you. May the families of each of these patients know that their loved one knows how much they love and forgive them. Let us pray for those patients who have died, may they rest in peace. May their caregivers know that they did everything they could to show them how much God loves them in their medical care, especially those in our community who work on those front lines. I pray you remember those words of Jesus at the Ascension, "remember I am with you always till the end of days."

Amen.