

In today's reading there is a great emphasis on the importance of light, namely God who is the light of the world, as Jesus says about Himself in the Gospel reading.

But what is God's light? God's light is Truth, the Truth about who He is and who we are in his eyes. Since God is a communion of love, and He is unconditional mercy, compassion, and acceptance, everybody and every relationship that reflects these qualities of God reflect God's light.

God wants us to see not only daylight but also the light of the Truth about who He really is, and He wants you to be filled with the light of the Truth and so become a bearer of His light to others. The healing of the blind man reflects this desire of God. Jesus not only wants to give this blind man the ability to see, but also wants Him to see God's light and share God's light with others. He wants us, the church community, to build up such relationships between each other where the light of God's love, unconditional mercy, compassion, and acceptance shines forth. People are attracted to such relationships whether religious or not. Such kind of atmosphere in a relationship also promotes trust, and in a trusting atmosphere people are more willing to bring to light what they hide in secret.

I believe now that Masses are suspended all of us, not only a few parishioners, but all of you are called and given a great opportunity to build up such trusting relationships on a one to one basis by reaching out to one another through simple acts of kindness, like shopping for each other, calling each other to ask how are you, etc. Such one to one and trusting relationships are lacking in our church communities. We always just gather for Mass and then most of us go home, and only a few people stay behind to build community as well. We were in communion with Christ, but are we in communion with one another as well. How can you love God whom you can't see, if you don't even know who is sitting beside you in Church? Now there is a great opportunity to contact at least those whom you know and through them get to know other members of the Church community and offer your support to each other, because this is a time of need in many ways. And if we do this well, the light of God's love and care will shine more brightly when we will gather again for Masses.

It also struck my heart what St. Paul said in the second reading: 'the things which are done in secret are things people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. St. John also says in his 1st letter (1:7, NIV) that 'if we walk in the light, as He [God] is in the light, we have fellowship with one another...' In practical terms this means that when you acknowledge your imperfections before people whom you trust, like your wife or husband or friend, they will do the opposite of what you expect: they will not reject you, but in fact they will embrace you or forgive you, if they truly love you, and so you will get even closer to one another.

The AA, alcoholic anonyms, counselling, etc. work on the same basis. Somehow when you bring to light what you hide something changes; you feel more free from the burden of a hidden imperfection, or you feel more accepted by your spouse or friend, who truly love you, and as a result you come alive. Confession works on the same basis: you are in a loving, unconditionally accepting atmosphere in confession and you bring to this sort of light of God your hidden imperfections with all honesty and humility, and then the priest tells you what God would tell you, and so he brings the light of God's mercy and forgiveness to you by way of His words, by which he also encourages you and strengthens you for your spiritual battle.

In prayer also it is very important that you bring to God's light in all honesty and truth your temptations and struggle and you tell Him what bothers you really. He doesn't only want to hear your standard repeated prayers, but also the prayers that are about your temptations and failings. He knows anyway what lies hidden in your heart, but when you open the door to these hidden areas God's healing light will shine into the dark corners of your heart and His light will drive out the cause of the darkness. The Unbound prayer ministry, which was presented to the people in Scotland last October at Sacred Heart, is based on this very simple truth: God's light, the power of His unconditional love and forgiveness, drives out darkness and the cause of darkness, namely evil.

So let's take this time while public Masses are suspended to build and strengthen such relationships between ourselves which promote trust, openness and reflect the light of God's love and care, His mercy, forgiveness and unconditional acceptance!