



*Reflection from Ben 4/18/2020*

Hello all!

I hope you are all doing well, safe and healthy.

This Sunday is the 2nd Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday. Through all the social, financial, personal and spiritual challenges we face due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Christ's divine mercy is very much present.

For baptized Christians, Easter is a time to celebrate birth and rebirth. It is a season to celebrate newness of life in the risen Christ. It is very difficult, however, to celebrate with just two of our five senses being used. It is tougher for St. James parishioners because we are especially people who love the sense of touch. I do miss all your hugs!

Jesus used touch to restore sight to the blind, bring life to the dead, heal a leper's skin and dispel Thomas' doubt that He is risen (Sunday's Gospel). Today, we need that sense of touch as we are quarantined in our own upper rooms. We can give that proper touch to those with whom we are sequestered in our homes especially the "little ones" while doctors, nurses and all health care professionals give COVID-19 patients their reassuring touch and heal those afflicted. Meanwhile, "staying in touch" is our best alternative to be connected with those separated from us. Yet, it is sad to note that since the lockdown order, there are those who abuse the sense of touch resulting in the rise of domestic violence.

Christ is risen! Our Lord conquered death. This means He also vanquished the result of death – separation. The risen Christ ate with the apostles and asked Thomas to touch his hands and his side. Our separation at these times of COVID-19, nevertheless, is nothing to be vanquished because it brings life to us and to others. It is the way to flatten the curve. This is a big irony: we defeat death by separation.

To all essential workers, the risen Christ is in you. Thank you!

*Blessings, Ben*