

**The Body and Blood of Christ 2020**

As I write this column I see in my imagination the Body and Blood of Christ agonizing in our streets. In the distance I see the Body and Blood of Christ suffering in hospitals and homes around the world.

Two crises have converged on us these recent months. Both have been in process for a long, long time. We have shown that we are not yet up to dealing with either.

The Covid19 crisis may have begun in a market in Wuhan, China, but our personal opposition to adapting our lifestyles to scientific and medical realities, plus a lack of adequate health care in most countries, has caused the whole world to be engulfed in a firestorm of deadly viral infection. The bodies and blood of the more than 420,000 who have died cry out for real and lasting solutions to government inaction and for healthcare for all the peoples of the world.

The other crisis, racial inequity and injustice, has been with us human beings for centuries. The killing of a black man by police in the United States two weeks ago has brought racial injustice to the forefront. This was not a unique event: many black people and other people of color have suffered and died at the hands of police and others who should be looking after their welfare. The death of George Floyd took the scab off an old wound, and the body and blood of George Floyd cry out for honest talk and real solutions to problems regarding race, policing, white privilege and more.

During this time of the Covid19 pandemic, we experience the loss of in-person reception of Christ in the Eucharist. Our faith tells us that God-in-Christ is still present with us in the Blessed Sacrament and that we can receive Christ *virtually/spiritually* in our hearts. But that's not the same. We miss *receiving* the Body and Blood of Christ and of being *present with* the flesh-and-blood Members of Christ in the community at Mass. This hunger for Christ in the Eucharist and in the Community is real and we feel it.

This hunger, however, can also be filled in a different way, through our connection with the body and blood of Christ hurting in the world. "As often as you did it for one of my least, you did it to me." (Mt 25:40) Every George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and every Covid19 victim, is Christ suffering and dying again in our midst. When we extend a hand, say a word, listen to a cry of anguish, offer help; when we utter a heart-felt prayer; – we touch the Body and Blood of Christ in the body and blood of our sisters and brothers, we have Communion "...you in me and I in you...." (Jn 14:20)