

A Take-away Coffee with Alessio



The Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of His garments

I tend to think about the ideas for my columns a few days ahead of time and then I type something up and leave it for a couple of days and then come back to it. This final copy of this week's column is the fourth draft. My column isn't the Inside Cover of *The West Australian*, nor is a written version of 7:30 with Leigh Sales, but I do try to make it current. We continue to live in uncertainty as governments around the world respond to the coronavirus and update their response on a daily basis. I started writing this week's column on Monday 23 March - the day after the government announced new restrictions on social gatherings and places where people gather together. Cafes and restaurants will only do a take-away service, cinemas are closed, places of worship are closed but at the time of writing schools are still open.

How pertinent is the title of this week's column - Jesus is stripped of his garments. We, have about been stripped of everything- so many people will be out of a job and are unlikely to find a different one in another industry, because so many "industries" have been closed down. My heart sank at the closure of so many businesses and the wide spread job loss! The various sporting leagues around the world continue to suspend their seasons. Just this week, the Tokyo Olympics have been postponed to next year. I mention the virus because it has certainly changed the way people operate at least in the short term. Countries such as Italy have been in lock down and around the globe governments continue to reduce the number of people that can gather both inside and outside. We hear daily of an increasing number of people in self isolation for various reasons. We now can't travel between states and territories. In our own Archdiocese, other dioceses around Australia and other countries in the world public Mass on weekdays and/or Sundays have been suspended for a period of time to be reviewed.

All of these situations I have mentioned are an example of people being "stripped" of something they need, enjoy or have become used to having as part of their daily routine. Jesus knew well what being "stripped" was like. He lay bare on the Cross. Like those people in self-isolation, he knew what it was like to be left alone. Like those people without a job, he knew the anxiety that unemployment causes. Imagine being in

quarantine for 14 days and not getting to see anyone. At the foot of Jesus' Cross, stood his Mother Mary, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala and Saint John - four people and that was it. One apostle betrayed Jesus, the other ten ran away - a bunch of scaredy cats! So, in all our problems and struggles, uncertainties and anxieties, let us turn to the Lord who knows well our strengths and weaknesses and put everything into His hands.

In the tenth station Christ speaks:
"Possessing nothing, I own all-
my Father's love."

The people reply:

"My Lord,
I offer you all-
whatever I possess,
and more, myself."

Yes, we can have so much stuff sometimes, that we don't have any room put anything and we can't find anything. At the end of each year there is always a cleanup in workplaces. I am amazed at how much stuff accumulates since the last clean up. Keeping what we need is essential. What we aren't going to need or use is best thrown out or given to someone who can use it. Tidying up is a time-consuming exercise, but a necessary one. At times it can be therapeutic. Next time we have our annual clean up, we can think of how Jesus didn't own anything and was stripped bare. Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

The verse of the hymn "At the Cross her station keeping" that follows the tenth station is as follows:

"Holy Mother, pierce me through,
in my heart each wound renew
of my Saviour crucified."

This Sunday is the Fifth Sunday of Lent. We are back to violet vestments after the brief reprieve last Sunday with rose vestments and rejoicing. We now head into the second weekend of not having public Mass. However, we can continue to pray on our own and in our families and read the Scripture readings for the Sunday Mass. We can also tune in to those Masses that are being live streamed or download them to watch later. Holy Week is drawing nigh, and I am mindful that it will be a very different experience for us this year. Holy Week preparations are up in the air at the moment and last weekend the Vatican issued directives to celebrate the liturgies of the Triduum without a

congregation present (but with the intention of the Mass being streamed). You can find the guidelines by clicking on this link

http://w2.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20200325_decreto-intempodicovid_en.html

Let's continue to pray for those working behind the scenes to stop the spread of the virus and for those who are treating people daily who have been infected with the virus. They are doing God's work and living out the Eucharist- that's for sure! Let's also pray for those people who have lost their job as a result of this virus. Work-life balance is important. Without a job though, we don't have money to spend on the things we enjoy. It can't be all work, so sometime this weekend a coffee will provide some thinking time. As for a coffee, well I can't have a dine-in coffee till further notice. On Sunday afternoon, I had my last dine-in coffee (before I knew these restrictions would be announced). I had a meeting to discuss plan b with regards to liturgical music for the next little while with two fellow musicians at Miss Maud's. I'm glad I did, because they too have now closed until Covid-19 is over. I don't normally do take-away coffees for a whole lot of reasons - but like everyone else I will have to adapt with the times. So, as a friend of mine said to me earlier in the week, I'll have to change the title of my blog - hence the different title until the virus is over.

Till next week - enjoy your take-away coffee!

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Friday 27 March 2020