

“Love brings people together; Charity brings Christians together”

Solemnity of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Dear St. Columbkille Family:

I, Fr. Lorenzo, as a person of Faith, who has the privilege of experiencing the presence of God in my life and recognizing my spiritual growth and maturity serving the Lord as a Priest, need to communicate to the people God has entrusted me to pastor.

We recently began the reopening of society and we are still struggling from the pandemic. Now we face a nationwide pandemic of violence and confrontations. Anger and frustration are felt by many, and countless protests are evidenced in cities throughout the country and the world.

We, Catholics are first of all Christians, who do not believe in violence and should neither endorse nor support any promotion of violence. This is an authentically Christian morality as is anti-abortion. We are today more conscious of the evil of racism and we should condemn it in all its forms.

I know that I am writing to a congregation with an elderly population who have worked hard throughout their lives; many of you with dramatic moments of suffering. We don't want more conflicts but we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism or exclusion in any form. We must defend the sacredness of every human life, as the Holy Father recently reminded us.

Allow me to invite all mature members of St. Columbkille Parish to somehow respectfully express our opposition to violence and to pray for the conversion of all individuals involved; from protesters, police forces, and even the president of the United States. We need to stop these evil actions and to find ways to dispel the racism, xenophobia, discrimination and absurd supreme-racism that have grown under this administration. This is not the “greatness” we want for our nation. This is not about politics, this is an anthropological, sociological and moral problem. The truth is the truth and we are not doing well, not only for us but for the generations to come.

For some parishioners to have the pastor writing or speaking this way, may sound unlikely but let me be clear at this point. I have been preaching justice and spirituality at St. Columbkille for over five years and I have done the best I can because I don't consider myself from the right nor from the left. I try at every mass to preach about Jesus' teachings. I know better than many of you the evil designed under socialism and I am proud and blessed to be out of Cuba, but that doesn't make me blind about the evil of the extreme right. There are anti-Christ signs in both ideological positions and here in America, I believe we can do better than we are doing now.

In my humble opinion the problem in today's world is caused by excess of power and control more than ideological. The domestic violence, the abortion, the homophobia, the human trafficking, the pedophilia, the abuse against women and minorities, the migration and racism

have a common origin and that is the excess of power and control worldwide, not only in America. What frustrates many of us at this time is that US has become another chaotic nation and we are not leading the world. Our democracy is at risk as well as our Christian values.

Let us pray with hope that a “new normal” will not include more violence in our beautiful country, but conversion, reconciliation and restoration of human dignity and peace for all.

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Last weekend, as we celebrated the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, we restarted our weekend masses. It was a joyful experience to meet again in church with many we love and have missed. We will continue with our six masses on the weekend: Saturday at 3pm & 5pm and Sunday at 7am, 9am, 11am and 5:30pm; keeping our social distancing of 6 feet all the time, wearing face masks, using hand sanitizing once we enter the church, taking the bulletin on our way out at the end of the mass and avoiding physical contact. Our church is sanitized and cleaned regularly and the clergy are happy to distribute Holy Communion observing the same regulations.

One of my priorities at St. Columbkille Parish is to keep our environment safe; I need your cooperation when you come to church. If you or someone you know may be a vulnerable person, ill or with health concerns; I will be happy to give Holy Communion in the driveway this Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, from 12 to 12:30pm. The dispensation from attending Sunday Mass in our diocese has been extended by the Bishop to June 28<sup>th</sup>.

We have begun an exciting experience on Saturday mornings to enrich the devotion to the Blessed Mother. We will have a Communal Prayer of the Rosary followed by the Marian Novena, Saturdays at 8:00am. A priest will also be available for confessions from 8:30am to 9:30am in the driveway, under the portico.

Church is open every day from 7:00am to 12noon and parish office is open from Monday to Friday from 8:30am to noon and from 1:00pm to 4:30pm.

This Father’s Day we would like to honor all men who humbly recognize the Divine Providence entrusted to them at the moment they became co-creators with God. We are going to have “Hot Dogs and Hamburgers to Go” at Iona Hall with no charge. No need to exit your car, just follow the signs as you enter our campus. Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am to 1:00pm.

May God bless you and yours with much love and abundant peace and faith in this Solemnity of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

Fr. Lorenzo