

Dear Friends of St. Lawrence,

Because we are technically within the Octave of Easter, I once again wish to extend to all of you my warmest and happiest Easter Blessings! Although we were not able to celebrate Resurrection Sunday this past weekend in church as we would normally do, it does not mean that Blessed Easter did not happen. Most certainly, it did, happen, and for this we *rejoice* in saying **Alleluia!** My friends, we are living in historical times and much to our dismay, there does not appear to be a genuine reason for us to celebrate. Sadly, a number of our very own parishioners have died as a result of Covid-19 and as a result, this Easter Week finds us mourning and crying and sorrowful - and for good reason. For way too many of us, the Season of Lent has not ended, nor will it end until a vaccination is found and distributed throughout the whole world. Therefore, we must dig deep into ourselves and try our very best to discover the very rich and beautiful treasure of hope.

Hope ... I wish to share with you a story of historical fact which goes as follows: Sometime during the 160's AD, there was a Roman Soldier by the name of Victor (now known as St. Victor). During the reign of Marcus Aurelies, this man had his eyes gauged out and was beheaded because he dedicated himself to Christ, which during that time, was considered a capital offense. Before St. Victor's martyrdom took place however, it is said that he was comforted in prison (while awaiting execution) by the 16-year old wife of another soldier who happened to go by the name of **CORONA**. It just so happens that *Corona* was arrested, investigated and interrogated for herself having pledged her unwavering allegiance to Jesus Christ, and as you could imagine, this did not sit too well with the Roman authorities. Ultimately, she would suffer the similar fate of martyrdom by being torn to pieces in the most despicable of ways. While her name was actually "Stephanie", the Greek translation, or equivalent, comes to "crown" - signifying her *passion* (much like that of Our Blessed Lord Who Himself wore the CROWN of thorns during His *Passion*). Obviously, St. Stephanie/Corona suffered greatly for her love of Jesus, just like her friend, Victor, and regrettably perished in the persecutions (among countless others).

St. Corona is the patron saint of treasure hunting, and today we are also hunting for a treasure - the treasure of a vaccine for the Corona Virus. St. Corona found her treasure in Jesus Christ and inherited eternal salvation. We all long for eternal salvation, but due to the fact that we all still remain in the temporal order, we also starve for the treasure of healing during this particular time of testing and pain.

For this reason, I encourage you, my friends, to pray to St. Stephanie/Corona for a cure to the Corona Virus pandemic. I remain HOPEFUL that just as this lovely saint found that which she sought during her time of hardship and strife, that the world will discover the coveted treasure of a medical termination to this heinous disease.

HOPE is on everybody's mind. HOPE is what will fuel our world to overcome Covid-19. HOPE is what will get us through these trying times.

May God bless you!

~Fr. Eric