

The Corona Test

The prohibition against Sunday Masses and Communion provokes a wide range of responses. Short-lived and least noble: a sense of relief – or compensation, perhaps – at not being required to attend Mass. Who does not love, at least for an illusory moment, release from the harness? A snow day from school...

But freedom is not ours; we are forbidden. Forbidden to make our normal rounds, forbidden to attend the feasts of Our Lord, forbidden to receive Jesus from our priests at public Masses.

Access to beer, lottery tickets, and abortion is permitted, the Eucharist is not. I am not opposed to beer, but who, under law, gets to make such distinctions and by what prejudices? Hearts once sweetened by the song of the Eucharist playing throughout the week are not soothed by the bleat of approval from credit card machines.

Oddly – or reliably, depending on your point of view – some churchmen see it as an opportunity to promote their political ideology by framing the plague as Nature's warning about global warming – as if nature were a person with a mind and a political agenda.

When did the Church cease speaking of the absolute kingship of God, deferring instead to "mother" nature? If any lesson is being taught, it is the Lord who teaches it. And while it is quite possible that God *is* teaching (and testing our faithfulness to Him), it is certain that He is preparing a great gift. Of course He is, for that is what God does, so much does He love us and want us to know Him intimately.

This I know: When we next receive Communion – assuming we have not set ourselves up for failure by dragging sin into His presence – we will experience the Eucharist anew: Christ will make *brilliant* His glory within us.

And at that moment we will be reminded that nothing, neither death nor disease, as awful as they are, matters so very much – for *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* – and even the love of family and friends, important and beautiful as it may be, pales beside the love of God and what He has done for us.

I used to wonder at the Apostles' verbal riot at Pentecost, the "speaking in tongues" ridiculed as drunkenness by some sceptical Jews at the time. But I now see that the joy of the descent of the Holy Spirit cannot be contained in our selves. Whether one is brought to tears of deep joy or given over to divine language bubbling from a spiritual well, the love of God is too great, too beautiful, too infinite, to keep locked within our mortal frames.

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