

*"For He has satisfied the longing soul, And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good."*

-Psalm 107:9

There is great longing in these days of quarantine - a longing for connection. I miss going to St. Joseph and being with our community. I miss playing at the 6:30pm mass. I miss the youth and their families. I miss receiving Eucharist, and being Eucharist with all of you. There is a great longing in my heart for communion.

Since the quarantine, we've been watching the masses online together as a family. On the first Sunday we watched, my daughters lined up for Communion in front of the TV. While it seemed a bit cheeky and cute, I was reminded of the greater meaning in this gesture of lining up to go to Jesus. There was a longing to approach the altar...the bread of life and the cup of hope. I was reminded that each and every Sunday we were given the privilege to come to Jesus. I was also reminded that we are commissioned at every mass to go from our church, into the world. We were sent each Sunday, to be Christ to a world that longs for love. There is a great longing in the heart of the world for communion.

It seems like the suspension of "normal" life activities has bred such longing. Personally, I don't think that's the case. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that before shelter-in-place was mandated, there was already a longing in my heart. I longed for more time with my family, I longed for sleep, for quiet, for peace, for more time to pray, for more time to practice my craft, for time to take walks with my wife and daughters. There was already a great longing in my heart for communion.

I'll be bold in making the statement that this longing for more quality time was and is a shared desire by many others. We share the same backdrop of this fast-paced, unrelenting world. Quality time seems to be a scarce commodity these days. I personally consider this time of quarantine, an opportunity to not only rally for our health by staying at home, but also an opportunity to embrace what we value. This is a time for the domestic church to rise up and take its place by being church in our homes. We can be church by gathering together around our tables in thanksgiving. We can come together as family and pray. We can reach out to friends and neighbors via technology and invite them into our prayers and celebrations.

The other day, we celebrated my wife's birthday through video conferencing. Rather than just sitting around staring at each other through a computer screen, I invited each of our friends to share an affirmation to honor my wife. In those tender and precious moments, I believe we were being Christ to one another. We can still find ways to thrive in love, during this trying time.

I look forward with hope, for the day that we can gather once again in the hallowed confines of our church, to satiate the hunger for Eucharist, to gather and celebrate in thanksgiving. But I will cherish also, with thanksgiving, the fact that God is already filling our hungry souls with what is good.

I, along with the staff of St. Joseph, hold all of you in prayer, peace, and love.

Jon Manongdo