



# Massillon Council 554



*Knights of Columbus*

*April, 2020*

**PLEASE NOTE: Due to the current Coronavirus pandemic and the extension of the “stay-at-home” directive until at least April 30, our council meetings and activities, K-Club Bar, Wednesday Hot Lunch, our Clubroom Dining Room and Monday night Bingo are currently closed or cancelled until further notice.**

**Friday Fish Fry dinners available from 4-7 PM for Take-Out.**  
**Call 330-837-9101 after 3:30 PM. Please help support!**

## **Grand Knight’s Report, by Robert Pittinger, Grand Knight**

Unfortunately, with the onset of this Coronavirus we are unable to live in the manner we normally do. All our meetings and our round table programs have been postponed. One action we can take is to pray for this to end.

There still are things we can do to help our families, neighbors and friends. We can keep in touch with them with just a simple daily phone call, picking up medicine and food for those who cannot get out.

A special thanks to Joe Vilhosky for setting up the nine-days Novena for Life and the Surrender Novena on-line for our members. All though the Forty Days of Life outside the Planned Parenthood has been canceled due to the Coronavirus. We need to continue to pray for the unborn.

Sorry to say that the Men's Fellowship Conference also has been canceled.

If you have Massillon Cable you can view the Mass on channel 117 and the Divine Mercy Chaplet is on daily at 3:00 pm and the rosary at 6:30. You can also view or listen to EWTN on channel 91 for various religious programs.

In place of our anxiety, give us your peace. Jesus Christ, heal us, Amen.” (Excerpt from prayer by Kerry Weber, America Magazine.)

## **Chaplain’s Report, by Msgr. James Kolp, Chaplain**

Who would have thought a month ago that we at this time would be living in a world-wide epidemic caused by a virus? It is like something new in the history of the world. We thank God for our governmental agencies setting up various precautions. As we live from day to day, we continue to wonder of the various effects of the virus on people all over the face of the earth.

Our Order is doing its best to help us and those around us to survive and even grow spiritually and mentally during these challenging times. The publication *Knightline* has given us many suggestions. Our Order is also thinking of the struggle of our parishes and dioceses. A 100-million-dollar fund has been established with up to a \$1 million dollar secured line of credit for Catholic dioceses. Supreme Knight Carl Anderson has said, "It is critical for us to support the Catholic Church in the United States at this time."

My brother Knights and ladies, let us make out homes like "little chapels." Let us do anything that our families, our parishes, our city and our Council ask us to do. In the Lord's Prayer we pray: "Father,.. deliver us from evil."

May each of us draw closer to our loving Savior each new day.

You are all in my daily prayers. Please keep me and my fellow priests in yours.

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## Massillon Council 554 2019 - 2020 Officers & Trustees

### Officers

Chaplain	Msgr James Kolp	871-8346
Grand Knight	Bob Pittinger	571-5150
Dep Grd Knight	Ken McLaughlin	571 1203
Chancellor	Vacant	
Recorder	Matt Meyer, PGK	284-9365
Treasurer	Paul Haig, PGK	837-1185
Financial Sec	Tim Paul	837-1411
Advocate	John Ferrero, Jr.	265-9584
Warden	Joe Vilhosky	833-0130
Inside Guard	Bob Catazaro	478-2264
Outside Guard	Bill Shane, PGK	268-0545
1- Year Trust	Jim Sieber, PGK	478-2363
2- Year Trust	Gary Lamielle, PGK	327-7223
3- Year Trust	Ken Girt, PGK	837-6670
Field Agent	Steve Hamrock	284-4034
Bulletin Editor	Ken Girt, PGK	837-6670
Webmaster	Kyle Shane	

### Parish Round Table Coordinators

St. Mary	Ken Girt, PGK	837-6670
St Joseph	Tom Ferrero	844-0469
St Barbara	Joe Vilhosky	833-0130

### Program Activity Chairmen:

FAITH	Michael Alesiano	340-7321
FAMILY		
COMMUNITY	Matt Meyer, PGK	284-9365
LIFE	Robert Kring	833-9851
Squires	Mike Szillat, PGK	830-4930
Membership	Ken Girt, PGK	837-6670
Complex Mgr	Vacant	837-9101
Bingo Mgr	Ron Kurpieski	936-8058
200 Club	Bill Shane, PGK	268-0545

Web: <http://www.massillonkofc554.org>

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### From the Editor.....Ken Girt, PSD, PGK, Newsletter Editor

Our “printed” newsletter format includes the first four pages of our multi-page electronic newsletter. This four-page document will be mailed to those who requested it. We will also have a supply of this four-page printed bulletin available each month for pick-up in our clubroom. We have also included Supreme Council’s Prayer for Protection during this pandemic on page 7 and our Holy Father’s comments during his March 27 “Urbi et Orbi” service. on page 8. We encourage you to read the complete electronic newsletter on our website.... <http://www.massillonkofc554.org>.

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### What’s Happening in...

#### .....April, 2020

- 7 7:00 PM 4th Degree Meeting CANCELLED
- 11 10:00 AM Easter Egg Hunt (Pavilion) CANCELLED
- 12 **Easter**
- 11:00 AM Easter Buffet CANCELLED
- 14 7:00 PM Reg. Council Meeting CANCELLED
- 21 5:00 PM MKF Clubroom Dinner CANCELLED
- 7:30 PM Columbian Ladies Meeting CANCELLED
- 28 6:00 PM Officers and Trustees Meeting CANCELLED
- 7:00 PM Council 554 Youth Awards CANCELLED

#### .....May, 2020

- 2 5:00 PM Kentucky Derby Party
- 5 7:00 PM 4th Degree Meeting
- 9 4th Degree Exemplification CANCELLED
- 10 **Mother’s Day**
- 12 7:00 PM Reg. Council Meeting
- 1st Nom of Officers
- 14 7:00 PM Stark County Chapter Meeting
- 15-17 OSC State Convention – Columbus ONLINE
- 19 7:30 PM Columbian Ladies Meeting
- 20 1:00 PM Bloodmobile
- 25 **Memorial Day**
- 26 6:00 PM Officers and Trustees Meeting
- 7:00 PM Council 554 “Social Night”

**Bingo:** Every Monday Night    **Hot Lunch:** Every Wednesday    **Massillon Knights Foundation Mtg:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues of month 6pm  
**Massillon Squires Circle Meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 7 PM, at St Joseph School

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### Fraternal Report, by Ken Girt PGK

**On Our Sick List:** Gerald Meyer, Bill Ringley, Ron Blogna, Bill Hamit, Jim Kracker, Richard Rootes, John Scheetz, Walt Featheringham, John Williams, Paul Renier, Terry Phillips & Chuck Meyer. If you want your name added to our sick list, or if you know of a member who should be added, please send me an email at [girtken@sssnet.com](mailto:girtken@sssnet.com) or call 330-837-6670.

## Family of the Month and Knight of the Month for March

Congratulations to **Bill and Connie Shane** for being selected as our Family of the Month for March. Bill is a MKF Trustee, Council Outside Guard, and both are active in our Bingo. We also congratulate **Eric Fichter** for being selected Knight of the Month for February. Eric is active at St. Joseph's parish and helps at our Night at the Races.

## In Memoriam: Lawrence Joseph "Larry" Rashid

Larry" Rashid, 74, of Massillon, passed away on February 29, 2020. He was born in Miami, Florida and graduated from Canton Central Catholic High School in 1963. He proudly served in the United States Army from 1964-66 in Germany with the 557th Med CO as an SP4 Medic. After he was honorably discharged, he attended Walsh University. He worked in his parents' restaurant, the Lincoln Lounge Steakhouse, which was owned and operated by the Rashid Family for almost 25 years. He went on to run The Oasis in Massillon with his brother Victor. He spent several years at The Elum Music Company.

Larry was a member of Massillon Knights of Columbus Council 554 and the Massillon Fraternal Order of Eagles. He was a devoted parishioner of St. Mary's Catholic Church where he served as an usher and volunteered for Bingo. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Korrin and their four children: Rachele, Marisa, Angela and Joseph.

May he Rest in Peace

## In Memoriam: Donald R. Harwig

Donald R. Harwig, age 82 of Massillon, passed away Tuesday, March 24. He was born in Akron, Iowa. Don proudly served in the Navy for four years during the Korean Conflict. He was a member of V.F.W. Post #3124.

Don was a Massillon fireman for 30 years and had served as assistant chief. He had also served as Massillon auditor for a year. In his retirement he was President and financial director of the Lions Lincoln Theater. He was a member and past president of the Massillon Lions Club, a member of St. Mary Catholic Church, and K of C Council #554. More recently he served as President of Massillon Main Street and was Holiday Parade President for 18 years.

Don is survived by his wife of 28 years, Sharla; sons, Donald and Scott, step-son, Scott, daughter, Deborah and step-daughter, Kelly.

May he Rest in Peace.

## In Memoriam: G. Frank Scassa

G. Frank Scassa, 72 of Massillon, passed away on December 25, 2018. He was born in Massillon and was a graduate of Washington High School. He is survived by his children, Gina, Nicole, Frank and Andrea. Frank was a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 554.

May he Rest in Peace.

*(Editor's Note: Council 554 was recently informed of Frank's death.)*

## In Memoriam: Michael Perez

Michael Perez, age 96, a longtime resident of Massillon, passed away on January 2, 2019. He was a 1940 graduate of Washington High School and served his country in the Army Air Corps during [World War II](#). After graduation from Kent State he began employment with John Hancock Insurance, retiring in 1982. Michael was a member of Council 554.

Mike was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Janet. He is survived by his children Tod, Joy, and Ray.

May he Rest in Peace.

*(Editor's Note: Council 554 was recently informed of Michael's death)*

**The Massillon Knights Foundation is in need of volunteers to work Bingo on Monday nights. (WHEN WE RESUME BINGO) Please consider donating three or four hours one or two nights a month to help working the food counter or working in the bingo hall. If you are able to help please call the office at 30-837-9101 and leave your name and phone number and we will contact you.**

## Super Cash Bonanza – Charity Raffle

By now, you should have received your 2020 Super Cash Bonanza tickets in the mail. Please help us receive the needed the ticket revenue for our council's charity donations. NOTE: the annual Ohio State Council Convention has been changed to a "virtual" convention and the drawing will still take place on May 16. **Buy or sell the tickets and return the stubs to the council in the envelop provided by April 13.** Thanks.

## Columbian Ladies Guild, by Karen Franz

We hope all of you are safely inside. Our March meeting was canceled for all of our safety. As of this date Bingo has been canceled with no idea when we will be returning to this fun night for everyone. Just a reminder we will be needing volunteers for Bingo lunch as we have lost several weeks of this revenue for the Columbian ladies but remember safety first.

Thanks to the Lamberts and crew for Friday fish. Remember to support you KC by calling and ordering fish. They will bring it out to your car under the front canopy. It was delicious.

April meeting is on hold for now. We will let people know as conditions improve (lets pray for that) if we will be having an April meeting.

Stay safe and wash your hands. May the Lord Bless You and keep you all safe.

## The Massillon Knights Foundation

**Foundation Trustees 2019-2020:** **One-Year:** Bill Shane (Vice President), Jeff Heitger (Secretary), Jim Sieber **Two Year:** James Brelish (Treasurer), Paul Lambert (President), Dave Cowley. **Three-Year:** John Williams, Bob Catazaro, Terry Phillips.

### Foundation Report, By Paul Lambert, President

As you know, the Coronavirus pandemic has affected all of us. We had to closed the restaurant and clubroom bar until further notice. We had several large catered events cancelled, plus Bingo, our Friday Fish Fries (dining-in), Tuesday clubroom dinner. Also, all Council 554 meetings and activities, the Columbian Ladies meeting, and Wednesday Hot Lunch are also cancelled until further notice.

With the cancellations of many of our hall rentals and events, we are losing over \$30,000.00. I'm asking every member if they would consider a kind donation of any amount to help defray some of our costs. We will still have bills coming in, such as electric, gas, water, insurance, and taxes. Any donation is tax deductible. Please make checks out and mail to: **Massillon Knights Foundation, 988 Cherry Road NW, Massillon, OH 44647**



## Fish Fry's during our shutdown

Every Friday 4:00 to 7:00 PM

Call 330-837-9101 after 3:30 pm for take-out orders to be picked-up at the main entrance door (front canopy). Or pick up order form in the special mailbox by the main entrance

## Bishop Massillon Assembly Fourth Degree

Faithful Friar	Fr. Raymond Paul 833-2607	Faithful Navigator	Matthew Meyer, 284-9365
Faithful Purser	Edward Shuman 854-3691	Faithful Inner Sentinel	Charles Meyer 833-0593
Faithful Captain	Roger Piper 936-0974	Faithful Outer Sentinel	Jim Coughlin, PFN
Faithful Admiral	Paul Haig, PFN 837-1185	Faithful 1-year Trustee	James Sieber, PFN 478-2363
Faithful Comptroller	Dan Flanagan 966-4937	Faithful 2-year Trustee	Frank Csipke, PFN 833-6176
Faithful Pilot	Leonard Hughes 834-5586	Faithful 3-year Trustee	Fred Russell, PFN 832-5420
Faithful Scribe	Mike Huryh	Commander	James Sieber, PFN 478-2363

### Faithful Navigator Report, By Matt Meyer, Faithful Navigator

I hope everyone is staying healthy and abiding by the stay at home policy set by the governor. We will obviously not have a 4th degree meeting until further notice. The gun show is also cancelled. The exemplification in Boardman on May 9th has also been cancelled but we should still recruit new members when we can.

Nominations for the new Master are going on now via email. There are two nominations so far. One is Robert Solomon, and the other is Dale Grimes. Both are very worth candidates. They do need one more nomination to send to the Supreme Master so if anyone knows of a candidate to nominate, let me know.

I will email if we are able to come back to our May meeting for the flag retirement ceremony. It is unlikely at this point but we will see. Stay safe, and continue to pray for our country and the world.

## Insurance Report, by *Stephen Hamrock, FIC*

Brother Knights,

Most of you know me as your Knights of Columbus Field Agent but before that I'm a Brother Knight and as such I wanted to send you a quick note that reflects the posture of the Knights of Columbus and my own commitment to serve you and your family in these unprecedented times.

As a framework, I want to employ the five pillars that Supreme Knight Carl Anderson has pointed to as characteristics found in men who, in time of crisis, not only survive but lead.

First, **we remain rooted in the truth of the faith.** We pray for one another, for the sick and the dying, and for the Church and world. In this we remain true to Fr. McGivney's vision of protecting families within the sure tracks of the Catholic faith.

Second, the Knights can be counted on to **step into the breach.** When disasters strike, the Knights are there with prayer and work, supporting first responders, providing shelter and assistance to those affected. This time is no different. Working together, we remain united and strong.

Third, **a Knight stays at his post.** I understand that you have concerns about health, finances, job security, savings, retirement, and these have only increased in these days. I am here to help allay those concerns and to answer any questions you may have.

We are ready **to suffer for the good.** It has fallen to us agents and our Supreme Council leadership to roll up our sleeves and get to work so we can remain effective as we work remotely and maintain social distance. To that end, we are employing new technology that allows us to meet "virtually," using a secure video conferencing software. It allows us to see each other, and to share a screen that features forms and other graphics.

Finally, **a Knight maintains humble confidence.** My commitment to you, our members and families, remains steady and is built not primarily on my qualifications but on the strength of our Order, which has grown and strengthened over more than 135 years. Our Order is strong and our guarantees remain in place.

As always, I stand ready to help. If you or anyone you know are in need of assistance of any kind during these trying times, please feel free to contact me at 330-284-4034.

Fraternally,  
Stephen J Hamrock, FIC



Knights of Columbus<sup>®</sup>  
**INSURANCE**  
YOUR SHIELD FOR LIFE<sup>®</sup>

**Stephen Hamrock, FIC**  
330-284-4034  
stephen.hamrock@kofc.org

**Life Insurance • Long-Term Care Insurance  
Retirement Annuities • Disability Insurance**

*Protecting Catholic families since 1882.*

### New Membership Recruiting Tool – Council 554 Landing Page

Supreme Council has now created a “Landing Page” for recruiting members for Council 554. For those with I-Phones or I-Pads, you can save the link below as one of your web favorites. When you find a potential candidate, access the link, have your candidate enter the contact information and press [Submit]. The information goes to Supreme and copied to Council Membership Chairman Ken Girt. We will process the application and you will get credit for recruiting a new member. Just access the link below and save.

[https://info.kofc.org/OH-Landing-Page-Council-554\\_Landingpage.html](https://info.kofc.org/OH-Landing-Page-Council-554_Landingpage.html)

### Council 554 Round Table Initiative: Divine Mercy Chaplet Recitation

Council 554 members is conducting the **Divine Mercy Chaplet** recitation once a month in our local parishes. Our Lord said through his apparitions to St. Faustina: "It pleases me to grant everything souls ask of me by saying the chaplet." The chaplet should be said during the 3:00 hour, for all of us who need His divine mercy.

The schedule is as follows:

**St. Joseph** the chaplet recitation at St. Joseph Parish is scheduled on the third Friday of the month at 12:30 PM, in the church following the Blessed Sacrament Exposition which runs from 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM.

**St. Mary** The chaplet recitation at St. Mary Parish is scheduled on the first Tuesday of the month, at 3:30 PM, in the chapel in the parish center on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The recitation of the chaplet will be said prior to the regular Tuesday Mass for St. Dymphna at 4:00 PM.

**St. Barbara** The chaplet recitation at St. Barbara Parish is scheduled on the fourth Tuesday of the month, 3:00 PM, in the church.

All are welcome at all of the scheduled recitations. To learn more about the Divine Mercy Chaplet, visit...

<https://www.thedivinemercy.org/message/devotions/praythechaplet.php>

### Super Cash Bonanza – Charity Raffle

By now, you should have received your 2020 Super Cash Bonanza tickets in the mail. Please help us receive the needed the ticket revenue for our council’s charity donations. PLEASE NOTE: the annual Ohio State Council Convention has been changed to a “virtual” convention and the drawing will still take place on May 16.

**Buy or sell the tickets and return the stubs to the council in the envelop provided by April 13.**

Thanks. And good Luck!

**Super Cash Bonanza 2020**

OHIO STATE COUNCIL KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OHIO CHARITY FOUNDATION

**DRAWING DATE**  
**Saturday, May 16, 2020**  
 9:30 a.m. Airport Marriott Hotel  
 Columbus, OH 43219

Donor need not be present.  
 Ticket Rules on Back.  
**Donation \$5.00**  
 All proceeds benefit local charities

**1st Prize \$49,680**  
 Payable \$414/month for 10 years!

**2nd Prize \$18,780**  
 Payable \$313/month for 5 years!

**3rd Prize \$12,720**  
 Payable \$212/month for 5 years!

4 <sup>th</sup> Prize..... \$4,000	14 <sup>th</sup> to 17 <sup>th</sup> Prizes... \$1,000
5 <sup>th</sup> Prize..... \$3,000	18 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup> Prizes..... \$750
6 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup> Prizes..... \$1,500	22 <sup>nd</sup> to 25 <sup>th</sup> Prizes .... \$500
10 <sup>th</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup> Prizes... \$1,250	

OVER **\$108,000** In Cash Prizes

FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
 STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 SELLER \_\_\_\_\_ COUNCIL **8115**  
 This ticket stub must have a full name and complete address or a full name and a ten (10)-digit phone number.

## A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION IN TIME OF PANDEMIC



The ancient fresco of Madonna del Soccorso (Our Lady of Help) in St. Peter's Basilica was restored with the support of the Knights of Columbus to mark the Year of Faith (2012-2013). Photo courtesy of Fabbrica di San Pietro/M. Falcioni.

O Mary,  
you always brighten our path  
as a sign of salvation and of hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,  
who, at the Cross, took part in Jesus' pain  
while remaining steadfast in faith.

O loving Mother,  
you know what we need,  
and we are confident you will provide for us  
as at Cana in Galilee.

Intercede for us with your Son Jesus,  
the Divine Physician,  
for those who have fallen ill,  
for those who are vulnerable,  
and for those who have died.

Intercede also for those charged with  
protecting the health and safety of others  
and for those who are tending to the sick  
and seeking a cure.

Help us, O Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform to the will of the Father  
and to do as we are told by Jesus,  
who took upon himself our  
sufferings and carried our sorrows,  
so as to lead us, through the Cross,  
to the glory of the Resurrection. Amen.

*Under thy protection we seek refuge,  
O Holy Mother of God.  
In our needs, despise not our petitions,  
but deliver us always from all dangers,  
O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.*

*Adapted from the prayer of Pope Francis*

*Editor's Note: The following is the text of our Holy Father's remarks during the March 27 "Urbi et Orbi" (to the City and to the World) prayer service. Please read and pray!*

## The Holy See

EXTRAORDINARY MOMENT OF PRAYER  
PRESIDED OVER BY POPE FRANCIS  
Sagrato of St Peter's Basilica  
Friday, 27 March 2020

"When evening had come" (Mk 4:35). The Gospel passage we have just heard begins like this. For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people's gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying "We are perishing" (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

It is easy to recognize ourselves in this story. What is harder to understand is Jesus' attitude. While his disciples are quite naturally alarmed and desperate, he stands in the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. And what does he do? In spite of the tempest, he sleeps on soundly, trusting in the Father; this is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. When he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, he turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" (v. 40).

Let us try to understand. In what does the lack of the disciples' faith consist, as contrasted with Jesus' trust? They had not stopped believing in him; in fact, they called on him. But we see how they call on him: "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" (v. 38). Do you not care: they think that Jesus is not interested in them, does not care about them? One of the things that hurts us and our families most when we hear it said is: "Do you not care about me?" It is a phrase that wounds and unleashes storms in our hearts. It would have shaken Jesus too. Because he, more than anyone, cares about us. Indeed, once they have called on him, he saves his disciples from their discouragement.

The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our



prepackaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people's souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly "save" us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity.

In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: "Wake up, Lord!"

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: "Be converted!", "Return to me with all your heart" (Joel 2:12). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves. In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: "That they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith"? Faith begins when we realize we are in need of

salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we founder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God's strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side. The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. Is 42:3) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.

Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith"? Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter's rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: "Do not be afraid" (Mt 28:5). And we, together with Peter, "cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us" (cf. 1 Pet 5:7).