



*God is there in the village.*

Bishop Enrique Figaredo Alvargonzalez. SJ  
Apostolic Prefect,  
Apostolic Prefecture of Battambang,  
Cambodia

*Sunday greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time.*

Today is **WORLD MISSION SUNDAY** which is celebrated in parishes and communities around the globe today.

## 1. REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.

We share two reflections on the Sunday scriptures our church selects for this Sunday.



The **first Sunday preaching** is offered by Maureen O'Connell who is Associate Professor of Christian Ethics in the Department of Religion and Theology at La Salle University.

Maureen received the Distinguished Lasallian Educator award in 2017 from both La Salle University and from the District of North Eastern North America, one of the provinces of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. She is a member of the national Lasallian Education Council, where she chairs a national ad hoc committee on advocacy. She is a member of POWER (Philadelphians Organizing to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild), an interfaith coalition of more than 50 congregations committed to making Philadelphia the city of "*just love*" through community organizing.

Here is part of her homily:

One Friday evening, at the end of the 6th week of my online semester and who knows how many weeks of this pandemic, I turned to my husband and asked, "It this what the end time feels like?"

Before he could answer, I rattled off a litany of evidence: nearly 200,000 Americans killed by COVID-19, fires out of control in California, hurricanes churning in the Gulf, new protests over police involved shootings of unarmed Black citizens and lack of convictions in related cases, grief over the loss of icons for justice still fresh, months of being isolated from family members either aging or coming of age.

"Seriously, is this the end time?" I repeated defeatedly.

"No it isn't, hon," my ever-optimistic husband replied. "It's the beginning."

...

So coming back to that conversation with my husband, no matter how challenging or bleak or despairing or draining these times they may be, we are not experiencing the end of days. If we remember who has chosen us, who calls forth, and readies us, then in fact we're at "*the beginning of the beginning.*"

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/10182020>

As today is *World Mission Sunday*, we offer a different [Sunday reflection](#): Pope Francis' message:

### *Here am I, send me (Is 6:8)*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

I wish to express my gratitude to God for the commitment with which the Church throughout the world carried out the Extraordinary Missionary Month last October. I am convinced that it stimulated missionary conversion in many communities on the path indicated by the theme: "Baptized and Sent: the Church of Christ on Mission in the World".

In this year marked by the suffering and challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the missionary journey of the whole Church continues in light of the words found in the account of the calling of the prophet Isaiah: "Here am I, send me" (6:8). This is the ever new response to the Lord's question: "Whom shall I send?" (ibid.). This invitation from God's merciful heart challenges both the Church and humanity as a whole in the current world crisis. "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" (*Meditation in Saint Peter's Square*, 27 March 2020). We are indeed frightened, disoriented and afraid. Pain and death make us experience our human frailty, but at the same time remind us of our deep desire for life and liberation from evil. In this context, the call to mission, the invitation to step out of ourselves for love of God and neighbour presents itself as an opportunity for sharing, service and intercessory prayer. The mission that God entrusts to each one of us leads us from fear and introspection to a renewed realization that we find ourselves precisely when we give ourselves to others.

In the sacrifice of the cross, where the mission of Jesus is fully accomplished (cf. *Jn* 19:28-30), God shows us that his love is for each and every one of us (cf. *Jn* 19:26-27). He asks us to be personally willing to be sent, because he himself is Love, love that is always "on mission", always reaching out in order to give life. Out of his love for us, God the Father sent his Son Jesus (cf. *Jn* 3:16). Jesus is the

Father's Missionary: his life and ministry reveal his total obedience to the Father's will (cf. *Jn* 4:34; 6:38; 8:12-30; *Heb* 10:5-10). Jesus, crucified and risen for us, draws us in turn into his mission of love, and with his Spirit which enlivens the Church, he makes us his disciples and sends us on a mission to the world and to its peoples.

"The mission, the 'Church on the move', is not a programme, an enterprise to be carried out by sheer force of will. It is Christ who makes the Church go out of herself. In the mission of evangelization, you move because the Holy Spirit pushes you, and carries you" (*Senza di Lui non possiamo fare nulla: Essere missionari oggi nel mondo. Una conversazione con Gianni Valente*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana: San Paolo, 2019, 16-17). God always loves us first and with this love comes to us and calls us. Our personal vocation comes from the fact that we are sons and daughters of God in the Church, his family, brothers and sisters in that love that Jesus has shown us. All, however, have a human dignity founded on the divine invitation to be children of God and to become, in the sacrament of Baptism and in the freedom of faith, what they have always been in the heart of God.

Life itself, as a gift freely received, is implicitly an invitation to this gift of self: it is a seed which, in the baptized, will blossom as a response of love in marriage or in virginity for the kingdom of God. Human life is born of the love of God, grows in love and tends towards love. No one is excluded from the love of God, and in the holy sacrifice of Jesus his Son on the cross, God conquered sin and death (cf. *Rom* 8:31-39). For God, evil – even sin – becomes a challenge to respond with even greater love (cf. *Mt* 5:38-48; *Lk* 22:33-34). In the Paschal Mystery, divine mercy heals our wounded humanity and is poured out upon the whole universe. The Church, the universal sacrament of God's love for the world, continues the mission of Jesus in history and sends us everywhere so that, through our witness of faith and the proclamation of the Gospel, God may continue to manifest his love and in this way touch and transform hearts, minds, bodies, societies and cultures in every place and time.

Mission is a free and conscious response to God's call. Yet we discern this call only when we have a personal relationship of love with Jesus present in his Church. Let us ask ourselves: are we prepared to welcome the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to listen to the call to mission, whether in our life as



married couples or as consecrated persons or those called to the ordained ministry, and in all the everyday events of life? Are we willing to be sent forth at any time or place to witness to our faith in God the merciful Father, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ, to share the divine life of the Holy Spirit by building up the Church? Are we, like Mary, the Mother of Jesus, ready to be completely at the service of God's will (cf. *Lk 1:38*)? This interior openness is essential if we are to say to God: "Here am I, Lord, send me" (cf. *Is 6:8*). And this, not in the abstract, but in this chapter of the life of the Church and of history.

Understanding what God is saying to us at this time of pandemic also represents a challenge for the Church's mission. Illness, suffering, fear and isolation challenge us. The poverty of those who die alone, the abandoned, those who have lost their jobs and income, the homeless and those who lack food challenge us. Being forced to observe social distancing and to stay at home invites us to rediscover that we need social relationships as well as our communal relationship with God. Far from increasing mistrust and indifference, this situation should make us even more attentive to our way of relating to others. And prayer, in which God touches and moves our hearts, should make us ever more open to the need of our brothers and sisters for dignity and freedom, as well as our responsibility to care for all creation. The

impossibility of gathering as a Church to celebrate the Eucharist has led us to share the experience of the many Christian communities that cannot celebrate Mass every Sunday. In all of this, God's question: "Whom shall I send?" is addressed once more to us and awaits a generous and convincing response: "Here am I, send me!" (*Is 6:8*). God continues to look for those whom he can send forth into the world and to the nations to bear witness to his love, his deliverance from sin and death, his liberation from evil (cf. *Mt 9:35-38; Lk 10:1-12*).

The celebration of World Mission Day is also an occasion for reaffirming how prayer, reflection and the material help of your offerings are so many opportunities to participate actively in the mission of Jesus in his Church. The charity expressed in the collections that take place during the liturgical celebrations of the third Sunday of October is aimed at supporting the missionary work carried out in my name by the Pontifical Mission Societies, in order to meet the spiritual and material needs of peoples and Churches throughout the world, for the salvation of all.

May the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of Evangelization and Comforter of the Afflicted, missionary disciple of her Son Jesus, continue to intercede for us and sustain us.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 31 May 2020,  
Solemnity of Pentecost*



MARY, MOTHER OF INCLUSIVE LOVE  
CAMBODIA

2. For those of us unable to gather for Sunday eucharist today, you may wish to prayerfully watch live-recordings of communities celebrating eucharist especially in our Cathedral of St. Stephen, Brisbane. This link takes you to the live-streaming page:

<https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/multimedia/on-demand-web-casts/>

Live-streamed daily eucharist continues at Lavender Bay, Sydney . . . prayerful and uplifting. Start time is 0730 Mon-Fri:

<https://www.northsydney Catholics.com/spirituality/liturgy/mass-on-demand>

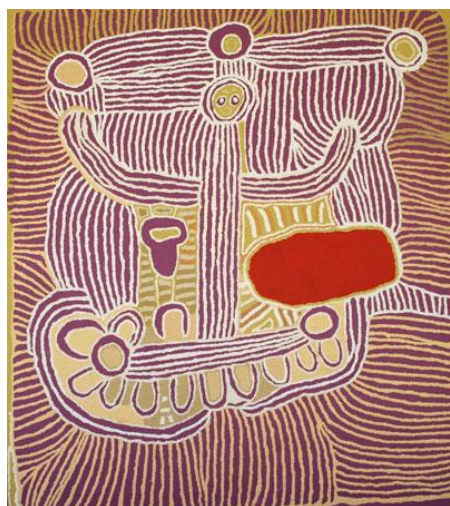
### 3. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin.



15th October 2020

4. We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond: all across the globe infected with COVID-19; former pastor of Boonah parish Fr. Ellis Clifford, Chris Healy, Bill Castley, Paul White, Thyrleene Devin, Bridget Muller, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Jonathon Hancock, Marko Babic, Dermot Peters, Max Gardiner, Nicole Wimmer, Bernice Lippiatt, Pat Toohill, Trish Merlehan, Suzy Collyer, Clare Conway, Pat Shannon, Bernadette Pinchin, Simon Greatrex, Neil O'Connor and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.

### 5. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*



SUNDAY EUCHARIST schedule is:

**Saturday**  
**5.00pm (Boonah church)**

**Sunday**  
**7.30am (Harrisville church)**  
**9.30am (Boonah church)**

*Desert Eucharist by Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (1937 -)*



Our WEEKDAY EUCHARIST schedule for this new week, the 29<sup>th</sup> Week of Ordinary Time, is:

<b>Monday</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> October	5.30pm, <b>Boonah</b> church
<b>Wednesday</b>		<i>No gathering at Peak Crossing on Wednesday</i>
<b>Friday</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> October	8.00am, <b>Boonah</b> church

*I will be away Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October hence the changed timetable.*

♦ We welcome to our parish *Chrissie Turner* from Rosewood who is our Catholic Mission Ambassador. Chrissie will speak to her experience of supporting Catholic Mission in Cambodia and invite us to take home envelopes for considering the support of Catholic Mission. This is an annual appeal.

Catholic Mission webpage also has a link to their publication *Mission Today*:

<https://www.catholicmission.org.au/mission-today-winter-spring-2020>

♦ Our **BOONAH PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL** met last week on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October. Thanks to Angela Conway for chairing our meeting in the absence of David Judge who usually chairs. Some snippets from the meeting:

- ✂ *Formation*: introduction to Pope Francis' new social encyclical *Brother and Sisters All*;
- ✂ A small team of four will determine the local need for a *Care and Concern Group*;
- ✂ *Boonah Parish Vision and Charter* will be taken-up next year in 2021 as there are imminent changes in the staffing of Evangelization Brisbane;
- ✂ *Boonah Parish Liturgy Team* has been formed and will meet to begin preparation for Advent-Christmas-Epiphany;
- ✂ *Arise!* Youth Group will be renewed in the coming months starting with the members ministering at a monthly Sunday Mass – the next one is **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November SOLEMNITY of ALL SAINTS 9.30am** - and preparation for regular gatherings. Agencies in the Archdiocese to be contacted for their support;
- ✂ COVID-19 update from Fiona Hogeveen;
- ✂ *Parish Database* being updated with parishioner data gathered from this time of pandemic.

♦ **Angela Conway** and **Noela Gilbert** have completed their two year term on the PPC. We thank them for their commitment and enthusiastic response over these recent years.

♦ **Sue Nykvist** has retired after 21 years of service in various paid roles in the parish as presbytery housekeeper and cleaner of the Boonah church. We wish Sue all the very best in her retirement. After two decades of service to this local Catholic community, *thank you!*

♦ We look forward to the baptism of **Lachlan Woodforth** (born June 2020), son of Sarah McInnes and Ben Woodforth, at our Harrisville Church on the last Sunday of this month.





- ♦ Thanks to those who are supporting our local SVDP food pantry. There is a great response from the community who gather at Harrisville church every week. On behalf of the local conference, THANK YOU.

*All donations are welcome. Dry-shelf contributions only please. Food donations can be placed in baskets at our two churches.*

6. At Sunday Masses across the parish last week, take home copies of literature from the Catholic Bishops of Queensland on today's "Dying Peacefully – No Euthanasia" Sunday were made available.

For parishioners who were away last Sunday, the literature is available at the entrances of our churches.

The letter of the Qld. Bishops may be accessed here:

[https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/assets/uploads/Bishops-Pastoral-Letter\\_final.pdf](https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/assets/uploads/Bishops-Pastoral-Letter_final.pdf)

Further resources:

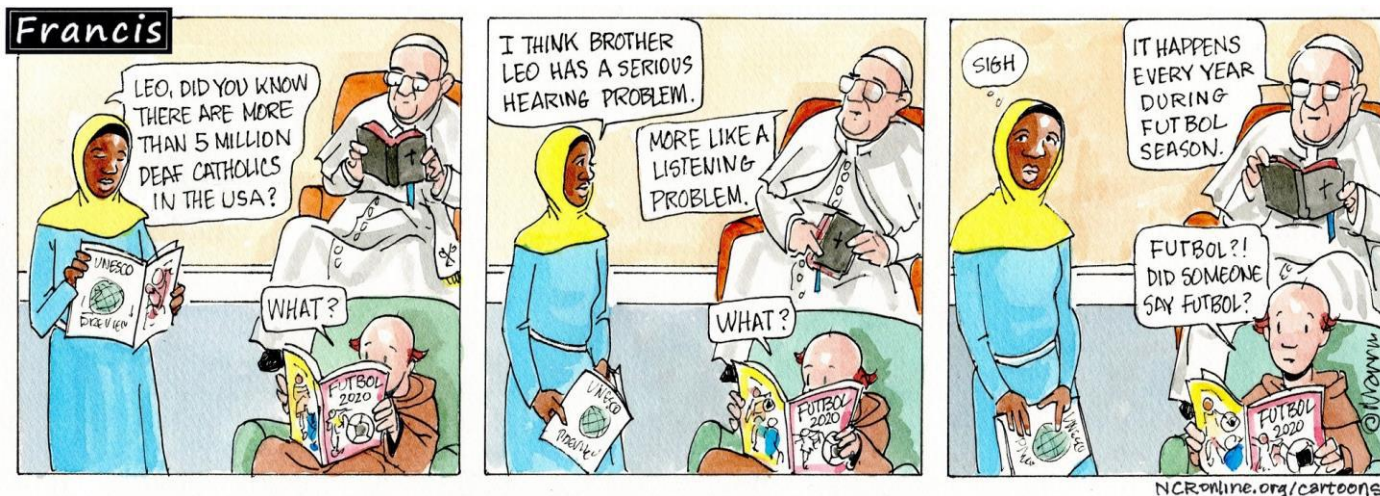
<https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/life/dying-peacefully/#resources>

Of particular interest are two fact sheets: (i) on palliative care; and (ii) on euthanasia and assisted suicide around the world.

As well there is a discussion paper penned by Dr Caroline Ong RSM who is a practising GP and a bioethicist. This document takes a pastoral approach to discussions of death and dying: "When Life is Ending: discussing dying, assisted suicide and euthanasia":

[https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/assets/uploads/End-of-life-2017\\_A5-FA-print-hires\\_no-crops.pdf](https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/assets/uploads/End-of-life-2017_A5-FA-print-hires_no-crops.pdf)

## 7. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin.



13<sup>th</sup> October 2020

....  
 from commands **to** invitations,  
 from laws **to** ideals,  
 from threats **to** persuasion,  
 from coercion **to** conscience,  
 from monologue **to** conversation,  
 from ruling **to** serving,  
 from withdrawn **to** integrated,  
 from vertical and top-down **to** horizontal,  
 from exclusion **to** inclusion,  
 from hostility **to** friendship,  
 from static **to** changing,  
 from passive acceptance **to** active  
 engagement,  
 from prescriptive **to** principled,  
 from defined **to** open-ended,  
 from behaviour-modification **to**  
 conversion of heart,  
 from the dictates of law **to** the dictates of  
 conscience,  
 from external conformity **to** the joyful  
 pursuit of holiness.

*When these elements are taken in the aggregate, they indicate a model of spirituality. This, they say, is what good Catholics should look like and this is how they should behave. That means the elements indicate what the Church should look like and how it should behave. This is a significant model-shift. This is a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.*

- Fr. John O'Malley SJ, 2006



8. The latest issue of America, the weekly Jesuit magazine from the USA, has a longish article by the same Fr. John O'Malley SJ whose quote above is very helpful for contemporary discipleship within the Catholic community of faith.



O'Malley is a fine historian who sees links with the past and the present and helps us understand the enormous diversity in the history of the Church. Typical 'O'Malley insights' abound like this on: *For the Council of Trent, the rulers chose most of the theologians. In 1551, Queen Mary of Hungary, for instance, sent eight. The pope sent two.*

The article is called: "Who governs the Catholic Church? It's an open question": [https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/10/16/who-governs-catholic-church-its-open-](https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/10/16/who-governs-catholic-church-its-open-question?utm_source=piano&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=5934&pnespid=mLJ0oqIFV1KN4Pqsb1P6YY_me45e_fgqQFlvDQK2)

[question?utm\\_source=piano&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=5934&pnespid=mLJ0oqIFV1KN4Pqsb1P6YY\\_me45e\\_fgqQFlvDQK2](https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/10/16/who-governs-catholic-church-its-open-question?utm_source=piano&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=5934&pnespid=mLJ0oqIFV1KN4Pqsb1P6YY_me45e_fgqQFlvDQK2)



9. THE CATHOLIC LEADER digital edition is available free at the moment and can be sent to your inbox every Thursday morning while the pandemic is still with us. Sign up on <https://bit.ly/2ShdcSZ>. The editor and his team hopes this offer gives us all a sense of connection, inspiration and renewal in the faith, at a time when living the faith has changed.



10. The *New England Journal of Medicine*'s Editorial on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 is sober reading:

THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE

## EDITORIALS



### Dying in a Leadership Vacuum

The Editors

Covid-19 has created a crisis throughout the world. This crisis has produced a test of leadership. With no good options to combat a novel pathogen, countries were forced to make hard choices about how to respond. Here in the United States, our leaders have failed that test. They have taken a crisis and turned it into a tragedy.

The magnitude of this failure is astonishing. According to the Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering,<sup>1</sup> the United States leads the world in Covid-19 cases and in deaths due to the disease, far exceeding the numbers in much larger countries, such as China. The death rate in this country is more than double that of Canada, exceeds that of Japan, a country with a vulnerable and elderly population, by a factor of almost 50, and even dwarfs the rates in lower-middle-income countries, such as Vietnam, by a factor of almost 2000. Covid-19 is an overwhelming challenge, and many factors contribute to its severity. But the one we can control is how we behave. And in the United States we have consistently behaved poorly.

We know that we could have done better. China, faced with the first outbreak, chose strict quarantine and isolation after an initial delay. These measures were severe but effective, essentially eliminating transmission at the point where the outbreak began and reducing the death rate to a reported 3 per million, as compared with more than 500 per million in the United States. Countries that had far more exchange with China, such as Singapore and South Korea, began intensive testing early, along with aggressive contact tracing and appropriate isolation, and have

had relatively small outbreaks. And New Zealand has used these same measures, together with its geographic advantages, to come close to eliminating the disease, something that has allowed that country to limit the time of closure and to largely reopen society to a prepandemic level. In general, not only have many democracies done better than the United States, but they have also outperformed us by orders of magnitude.

Why has the United States handled this pandemic so badly? We have failed at almost every step. We had ample warning, but when the disease first arrived, we were incapable of testing effectively and couldn't provide even the most basic personal protective equipment to health care workers and the general public. And we continue to be way behind the curve in testing. While the absolute numbers of tests have increased substantially, the more useful metric is the number of tests performed per infected person, a rate that puts us far down the international list, below such places as Kazakhstan, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia, countries that cannot boast the biomedical infrastructure or the manufacturing capacity that we have.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, a lack of emphasis on developing capacity has meant that U.S. test results are often long delayed, rendering the results useless for disease control.

Although we tend to focus on technology, most of the interventions that have large effects are not complicated. The United States instituted quarantine and isolation measures late and inconsistently, often without any effort to enforce them, after the disease had spread substantially in many communities. Our rules on social distancing have in many places been lackadaisical



at best, with loosening of restrictions long before adequate disease control had been achieved. And in much of the country, people simply don't wear masks, largely because our leaders have stated outright that masks are political tools rather than effective infection control measures. The government has appropriately invested heavily in vaccine development, but its rhetoric has politicized the development process and led to growing public distrust.

The United States came into this crisis with enormous advantages. Along with tremendous manufacturing capacity, we have a biomedical research system that is the envy of the world. We have enormous expertise in public health, health policy, and basic biology and have consistently been able to turn that expertise into new therapies and preventive measures. And much of that national expertise resides in government institutions. Yet our leaders have largely chosen to ignore and even denigrate experts.

The response of our nation's leaders has been consistently inadequate. The federal government has largely abandoned disease control to the states. Governors have varied in their responses, not so much by party as by competence. But whatever their competence, governors do not have the tools that Washington controls. Instead of using those tools, the federal government has undermined them. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which was the world's leading disease response organization, has been eviscerated and has suffered dramatic testing and policy failures. The National Institutes of Health have played a key role in vaccine development but have been excluded from much crucial government decision making. And the Food and Drug Administration has been shamefully politicized,<sup>3</sup> appearing to respond to pressure from the administration rather than scientific evidence. Our current leaders have undercut trust in science and in government,<sup>4</sup> causing damage that will certainly outlast them. Instead of relying on expertise, the administration has turned to uninformed "opinion leaders" and charlatans who obscure the truth and facilitate the promulgation of outright lies.

Let's be clear about the cost of not taking even simple measures. An outbreak that has disproportionately affected communities of color

has exacerbated the tensions associated with inequality. Many of our children are missing school at critical times in their social and intellectual development. The hard work of health care professionals, who have put their lives on the line, has not been used wisely. Our current leadership takes pride in the economy, but while most of the world has opened up to some extent, the United States still suffers from disease rates that have prevented many businesses from reopening, with a resultant loss of hundreds of billions of dollars and millions of jobs. And more than 200,000 Americans have died. Some deaths from Covid-19 were unavoidable. But, although it is impossible to project the precise number of additional American lives lost because of weak and inappropriate government policies, it is at least in the tens of thousands in a pandemic that has already killed more Americans than any conflict since World War II.

Anyone else who recklessly squandered lives and money in this way would be suffering legal consequences. Our leaders have largely claimed immunity for their actions. But this election gives us the power to render judgment. Reasonable people will certainly disagree about the many political positions taken by candidates. But truth is neither liberal nor conservative. When it comes to the response to the largest public health crisis of our time, our current political leaders have demonstrated that they are dangerously incompetent. We should not abet them and enable the deaths of thousands more Americans by allowing them to keep their jobs.

Disclosure forms provided by the authors are available with the full text of this editorial at NEJM.org.

1. Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center. COVID-19 dashboard by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University (<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>).

2. Total number of COVID-19 tests per confirmed case, September 14, 2020. Our World in Data (<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/number-of-covid-19-tests-per-confirmed-case>).

3. McGinley L, Abutaleb L, Johnson CY. Inside Trump's pressure campaign on federal scientists over a Covid-19 treatment. Washington Post. August 30, 2020 ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/convallescent-plasma-treatment-covid19-fda/2020/08/29/e39a75ec-e935-11ea-bc79-834454439a44\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/convallescent-plasma-treatment-covid19-fda/2020/08/29/e39a75ec-e935-11ea-bc79-834454439a44_story.html)).

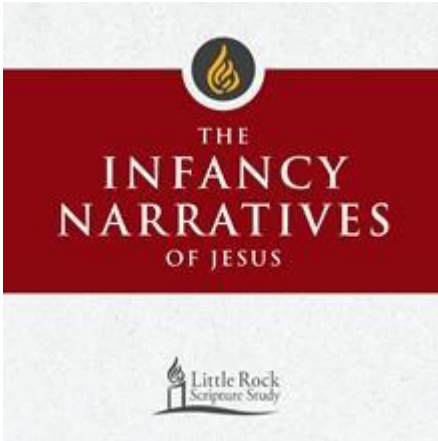
4. Haberman M. Trump admits downplaying the virus knowing it was 'deadly stuff.' New York Times. September 9, 2020 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/09/us/politics/woodward-trump-book-virus.html>).

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11. Advent is fast approaching! Yes . . . *Advent starts after the next five Sundays.*



Garrett Publishing, a religious publishing house in Australia, sent us advertising about a revised book called *The Infancy Narratives of Jesus*. I have ordered a copy.

There are only **three** lessons! I thought some of us would be interested in looking at these gospel stories from Matthew and Luke.

It looks great: commentary, reflection questions for discussion, prayers and access to online lectures.

Dates to follow and starting the first week of December.

12. A month ago, I watched Anh Do's *Brush with Fame*. It is now Series 5! He was painting Melbourne priest Fr. Bob Maguire. I really enjoyed the conversation and the painting:



<https://iview.abc.net.au/video/DO1830H007S00>

A friend of the parish highly recommended the latest episode where Anh talks to and paints Michelle Payne, Australian jockey:



<https://iview.abc.net.au/video/DO1830H010S00>

Take some time this week to be uplifted . . . we thrive on good news!

Enjoy the new week ahead.

*John,*  
*pastor*  
*Boonah Catholic community*