

April 10, 2020

I know that a case can be made for a priest saying Mass alone in an empty church but that is, in my mind, an academic issue. Liturgy or Mass for me is not a priest “doing” something, but a community “being” something.

A community of people gathered in one place with music, crying babies, kids all over, and familiar faces in familiar places, for an hour or so on Saturday evening or Sunday morning, funeral, wedding, baptism, we become a strange reality in this world, our bodies are engaged just by the fact of getting there in the first place, our minds, may or may not become engaged, I hope they do, but we are all together, all unique, all ages, all kinds of concerns, issues, desires, fears, all manner of human being in this world, frail, faulted, incomplete, but we turn ourselves, or, better, we allow ourselves to be turned into the Real Presence of a Mystery in this world and then we leave and go back to ordinary time.

Until the next time.

I can only grieve this not try and replicate it by myself.

The official opening prayer this year for the Catholic Good Friday Liturgy is as follows:

“Almighty and eternal God, provident refuge in every danger, kindly turn your gaze toward us, who with faith implore you in tribulation, and grant eternal rest to the deceased, comfort to those who weep, health to the sick, peace to those who are dying, strength to healthcare providers, a spirit of wisdom to civil authorities, and a heart to draw near to everyone with love so that together we might glorify your holy name.”

I will say that prayer about 2:45 this afternoon and then I will turn to the Old Saint Pat’s Chicago website to pray with our friend, Terry Nelson Johnson who has come to our parish for years to help our First Communion and Confirmation families prepare to celebrate those sacraments.

The Stations of the Cross are not liturgy, they are a private devotion prayed alone or in community. Terry Nelson Johnson is a gifted spiritual teacher. Join me, please.

Old Saint Pat’s can be found at [www.oldstpats.org](http://www.oldstpats.org)

Look for the green box Holy Week Livestreams <https://livestream.com/oldstpats/events/9069493>