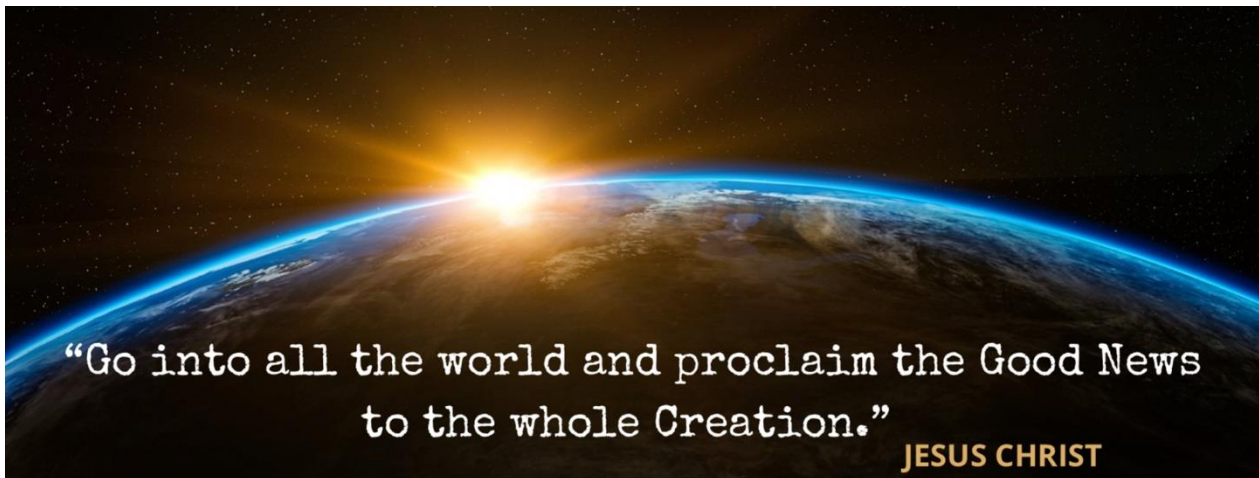


MIRACLES & THE ENORMOUS CHALLENGES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ASCENSION OF THE LORD – 16 MAY 2021



Gospel of Mark 16:15-20

THE ASCENSION – REMEMBERING WHEN JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN

This Ascension Celebration, we remember that when Jesus ascended to heaven,

- + He had already prepared the disciples,
- + He commissioned them
- + He told them to look for the signs
- + and He promised the Holy Spirit would come to them.

GOSPEL OF MARK 16:15-20 - COMMISSIONED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In this weekend’s Gospel of Mark 16:15-20
we hear that Jesus commissions the disciples:

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.”

We are commissioned to make a difference.

Concerning COVID, we need to work *together as a family – the human family*.
As a world community we were warned of the dangers of future pandemics.
We need to take the warnings seriously.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION INDEPENDENT REPORT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In the recent WHO independent report on the Pandemic we heard in the [companion document](#) that

- *“Although public health officials, infectious disease experts and previous international commissions had warned of potential pandemics and urged robust preparations since the first outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), COVID-19 still took large parts of the world by surprise. This should not have been the case....”*
- *“Countries were not prepared and investment in disease outbreak preparedness systems and capacities has been insufficient;*

in too few cases were national response capacities subjected to rigorous stress tests. Preparedness metrics failed to predict weaknesses— COVID-19 has laid bare the deficiencies. In spite of the warnings of pandemic risk and clear recommendations on what needed to be improved, the world had not taken these issues seriously.”

WE BEGAN PRAYING FOR NEW TREATMENT & VACCINES

In March last year, as we began [praying for new treatments and vaccines](#) for Covid, we read in the media from some medical experts not to expect such developments too soon.

It could take years. The task was so enormous.

A MIRACLE OF PEOPLE WORKING CLOSER TOGETHER

And yet a miracle did happen.

A miracle of people working closer together for medical solutions.

As the WHO Independent companion report says:

- *“The emergence of SARS-CoV-2 was met by the largest and fastest accumulation of scientific research in human history, much of it coming through more open channels than ever before. Scientific journals opened to greater sharing, preprint servers distributed findings quickly, databases such as the European Bioinformatics Institute collated information. Researchers have been able to make broad use of tools such as SAGE, a technological infrastructure that makes sharing relevant data such as genome sequencing easier.”*

We are waiting to see others miracles - including the miracle of the world family determined to work together to make the world safer again.

To do this, we as a world community need to overcome the obstacles that we have placed in our own way - overcoming group rivalries, political divisions, avarice and lack of self-discipline.

We have seen signs that this can happen.

We have also seen what happened when nations ignored the health signs.

The Bible tells us what the disciples did:

“And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.”

Let us not give up hope.

We have a choice – we can make a difference.

What a sign we have already received –

‘the largest and fastest accumulation of scientific research in human history’

Let us pause and pray about how we can work together as a world family in our response to the formidable challenges of the Pandemic.

[pause]

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry

readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/051621-Ascension.cfm>

FURTHER INFORMATION:

[HOW AN OUTBREAK BECAME A PANDEMIC - THE DEFINING MOMENTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC](#) is a Companion Document to the report and is quoted in this homily.

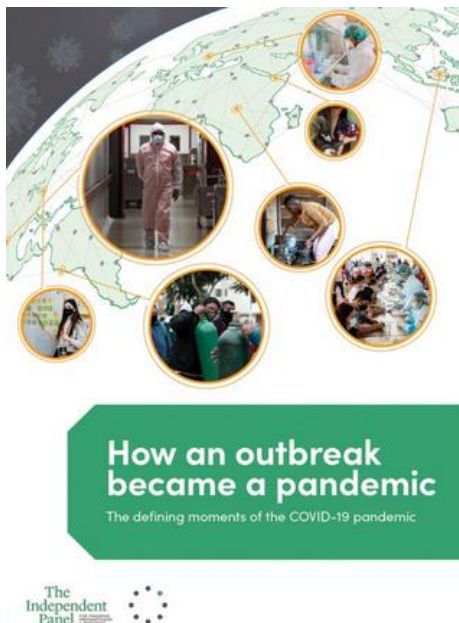
“THE INDEPENDENT PANEL FOR PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE was established by the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General in response to the World Health Assembly resolution 73.1.”

“In May 2021, the Independent Panel presented its findings and recommendations for action to curb the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure that any future infectious disease outbreak does not become another catastrophic pandemic.”

Various formats of the document and background are available at:

<https://theindependentpanel.org/mainreport/>

Click on the image below to go to the companion document quoted in this homily



Click on the image below to go to our prayer of March 2020

