

Piety in the Pestilence V

It has occurred to me that a question announces its presence during interesting times such as these where we are forbidden to regularly gather for the Lord's Supper and for prayer: how does our sacramental faith look when we cannot have the sacrament?

It is not a new question. It is perhaps a question that occurred to every good Christian for a thousand years who had to flee into the wilderness during a persecution or, more commonly, march off to a long campaign during a war.

A good friend of mine and friend of our congregation, Rev. Christopher Clark, mused on this topic briefly:

It's a shame that more people don't know St. Patrick's hymn, "I Bind Unto Myself Today" [LSB 604] especially in these coming days when it appears that virtually the entire church in America may be robbed of the ensign to which she rallies in her warfare, namely the elevation at the Pax Domini.

We may soon become like a scattered army, each soldier or group of soldiers forced to fight Satan's forces on their own. These are the kind of days when the question, "Not just 'how well,' but 'HOW AT ALL' have you been equipped?" may become extremely important. Has your "equipping" prepared you to fight temptation in relative isolation? Has it warned you of the grave danger of apostasy? Has it provided with the full armor of God?

Or has your "equipping" been more for "telling others about Jesus" in an effort to boost attendance figures (ironically in churches that have already and may be forced to stay closed)? Has it been about how to sow the seeds to guarantee that epidemics and recessions don't affect you? Has it made you dependent not upon an external, unfailing Word, but reason and heartfelt emotion to validate your faith?

Perhaps, in the coming weeks and months, we will learn something that saints like Patrick knew so well—the value of having the right breastplate when going

into spiritual battle.

The question of how our faith plays out during spiritual famine has been asked, and perhaps these coming weeks shall, indeed, reveal to us the necessary answer. Let us then indeed place upon ourselves St. Patrick's breastplate, and endure, to the glory of God, until we again are rejoined together as one Church, partaking of the one body of our one God, Jesus Christ.

Pastor Fields