

# Quarantine Thoughts-1

*Reflection of Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020*

## True Freedom and Spiritual HIBERNATION in this Corona period

### Introduction

During my theology Course, a group of us were sent to a remote village in India for a special and unique way of spiritual formation. For a month, we were in Social Isolation without mobiles, land lines, internet or Radio. Surprisingly, NO MASSES, BIBLES or books. When we questioned of our mental and social dimensions, we were told by the superiors that it may feel strange and 'mad', but this is to prepare for similar situations in future like religious persecution, war, epidemics or bed riddance. All the studies and spiritual exercise should enable to get through.

Today we are in such a situation where we have been asked to confine ourselves, denied of our long cherished and practised Sunday Mass and other liturgical services. Thanking God we can still read the Bible, live stream Masses and other spiritual stuff.

### ***We are in 'SPIRITUAL HIBERNATION'***

In today's Gospel Jesus says that *"You will learn the truth and the truth will make you free"* John 8: 32. During these times, many angry, frustrated and anxious thoughts can cross our minds. After all, Freedom is the dearest and costliest for everyone.

The best and only way to come to terms with the situation is to accept the reality. When we voluntarily accept this period of quarantine or social isolation, we can make this period more worthwhile and get prepared to start again when it is time.

***What is QUARANTINE?*** The word *quarantine* comes from *quarantena*, meaning "40 days"

### ***BIBLICAL REFERENCES:***

An early mention of isolation occurs in the Biblical book of Leviticus,( Lev: 13:45) written in the seventh century BC or perhaps earlier, which describes the procedure for separating out infected people to prevent spread of disease under the Mosaic Law:

1) *"The LORD struck the king, so that he was a leper to the day of his death And he lived in a separate house, while Jotham the king's son was over the household, judging the people of the land". 2 Kings 15:5;*

2) *"But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and it does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and the hair on it has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate him who has the infection for seven days". Leviticus 13:4*

*Other references are in Book of Leviticus Chapters 13, 14 and 15;  
and book of Numbers Chapters 3,5 and 31*

### ***Jesus practised social isolation***

There are also examples from the New testament that prove even Jesus observed social isolation as a way to meditate and pray. We see that Jesus after getting baptized spent 40 days praying in the wilderness. "At once the Spirit sent [Jesus] out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals & angels attended to him." (Luke 4:1-2,14-15)

### **The God-given quarantine of the scriptures was composed of 3 basic principles:**

1. That many become sick and die due to the negligence of the sick people who have got contagious diseases .
2. The principle of being unclean meant that one carried an infectious contagion which required separation from the general population.
3. Minimum seven days of separation was one of several time periods of quarantine commanded by God. This number seven jumps out because it is the life cycle of various infectious organisms, such as the one that causes the common cold.

The number of health benefits hidden in the commandment of quarantining is much bigger than casual consideration, and surely past ever fully discovering. Though most of us are being forced by the coronavirus (COVID 19) outbreak to practise self-quarantine and isolation but these testing times can help us draw closer to God.

### ***Do we need to follow the Government rules and directives?***

Absolutely! Because we live in a society and we have a moral and legal responsibility to respect and protect others. The best charity we can do now is self-isolate.

The decision to cancel church gatherings was not easy, but it is the right thing to do now. We know that COVID-19 is usually passed through human contact (handshakes and touching), through droplets in the air (sneezes and coughs) or contact with infected surfaces (doors, pews, hymnals). This is not the time to get scrupulous about Sunday obligations and other spiritual activities.

***What would Jesus do? Jesus would tell you to stay home for your own good and the good of your neighbour.***

***Father Joseph***