

Ghost Town

March 25, 2020

The downtown St. Paul streetscape has changed significantly since the early beginnings of the COVID-19 virus bursting across the world. The pandemic has already changed the way people live and work and interact on a human level. No longer do we have the sense of freedom to do what we want, when we want and where we want. We are feeling a shift in how the world operates—how interlocking social systems have been fractured—much different than what we have become accustomed and comfortable with. *Change...*

I parked my car in a nearly empty ramp and walked two blocks to my post in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). Rather than the usual whooshing of commuter traffic and buses, the clanging of light rail train bells, and the constant sound of construction sites, the place was eerily quiet. I could plainly hear the “click, click, click” of the pedestrian crossing light countdown as I stood at the corner crosswalk. A lone pigeon landed on the sidewalk to grab a small piece of bread, then fluttered away with the soft beating of her wings. I had a feeling of utter aloneness, bleak and desolate, dreary and abandoned—a place of lifeless void and hopelessness.

The place was a **“GHOST TOWN!”**

But as I entered the SEOC, a bright light bathed the space with welcome warmth, and the many rooms were abuzz with activity. Staffers and personnel from all state and federal partner agencies moved about the space, sharing information and other resources with each other. Problems and concerns were being discussed and important decisions were being made by elected officials and policy makers, validated by the wisdom and knowledge of many subject matter experts. Problems and concerns were not only voiced and heard, but addressed and responded to by caring professionals with open hearts and minds. *People truly helping people.*

My own mind and heart began to discern what was really going on in this space, not using the common senses we normally utilize to navigate our world—sight, smell, taste, hearing, and touch. My mind and heart moved towards the sensing of what is beyond ourselves and moving about us—*the Holy Presence of God.*

Indeed, we are truly living in a “**GHOST TOWN**” –that being a world filled with the presence of the Holy Ghost...*the Holy Spirit!*

The Book of Common Prayer states:

“And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring into fulfillment the sanctification of all.” (BCP: 374)

The Holy Spirit centers the gathering of the Church together in unity, directing and ruling the hearts and Minds of Christians, enlightening and strengthening us for God’s service, and abiding with us forever. The Church is the sphere of the activity of the Holy Spirit, and the liturgy is filled with the action and power of the Spirit.

In our own place of social distancing and isolation from beloved friends and family at this time, know that none of us are alone. The one who rules this “**GHOST TOWN**” is ever present with us, always caring for us, and is crazy in love with us. May the Holy Spirit alight upon you this day and evermore.

Peace and all good.

Randy+