

Do Your Worst, Devil!

Edited from Rev. Will Weedon's Facebook page, an imaginary conversation between Satan and God –

Satan: Let me strike them with plague and fear and death. They deserve it.

God: Go for it! Meanwhile, I've arranged for my Word to take over their social medias, given them times of solace to reconnect with their family and reconnect their family to my Word, filled them with the bread of life that they might live forever and ever; taught them to *ache* for the Eucharist; and shown them the vanity of all earthly things and the one thing needful which only I can provide). Good idea!

I trust that Rev. Weedon's sarcasm is not lost on anyone . . .

So, you thought THIS was the crisis?

I just caught up to viewing a video from late last week. I had been registered for a webinar then, but technical difficulties prevented me from seeing it live at the time. The organizers sent me a link to the recording, though, and I have now viewed it.

This webinar made a good point. What we are going thru now ("shelter in place" in Illinois and elsewhere, etc.) is not the crisis – certainly not the heart of it. So far, we have pretty much been only inconvenienced. Worse is on the way, however.

In this coronavirus outbreak, maybe the most widespread catastrophe we've experienced in our lifetimes, we will likely go thru 4 basic phases:

- 1) Pause and innovate
- 2) Plan and prepare
- 3) The crisis
- 4) Recovery, restoration

It's high time to be transitioning out of phase 1 into phase 2. We would do well to have phase 2 pretty well done by Palm Sunday. If you have not begun on phase 2, time for a kick-start!

For most of the instances of severe illness and death probably still lie ahead of us in the U.S. That will be big crisis time, at least in this country.

Even after the current outbreak calms down, coronavirus will probably flare up now and then, here and there, perhaps at various times and places. And it may again require extreme social distancing, and so forth. No one has a crystal ball, but it appears that we will soon have other fish to fry than just how to put a Sunday service online.

One of the Synod's mission priorities is to "Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries." Opportunities to do just this are likely coming our way!

"This is real love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, if that is how God loved us, then we have an obligation to love one another" (1 John 4:10-11). Luther wrote that "a Christian . . . is conscious of nothing else than that the goods which are his are also given to his neighbor. He makes no distinction, but helps everyone with body and life, goods and honor, as much as he can" (AE 36, 353). Luther commented that such love is a fruit of the Lord's Supper.

Page two of the present *See! WOW?* newsletter contains suggestions both for phase one and phase two. Please share them with your Circuits in every way you can under current circumstances.

Like our last newsletter, this one is also going to CID Circuit Visitors. Not that our C-WOWs do not do a great job already, for they do! But this step is especially for the sake of the Circuits that have not appointed C-WOWs.



See? **WOW!** News and Encouragement for CID Circuit **W**itness & **O**utreach **W**orkers

Worth considering:

A few more “phase one” suggestions:

1. By Easter, gatherings may still be limited in Illinois – even if not to groups as small as 10. CID churches with capacity to make services available online might consider extending invitations to other CID churches that lack this capability. Invite the pastor from one of these churches to be liturgist or lector, or even preacher, for your video Easter service. Members of their churches will view your Easter service too, and can tell friends about it.
2. I am compiling a list of churches that broadcast their services on RADIO, and will continue doing so for the next few weeks. I have in mind especially older people, who can simply tune in. I need this info on churches in YOUR CIRCUIT ... ASAP, so I can send out a listing soon, enabling people to invite others to listen on Easter.
3. If your church is digitally recording services now, offer these recordings to your local cable access channel. Be sure that every recording you submit gives viewers a good look at your church’s contact information. Cable access is free, and not many watch it. Yet, who knows? Thru it, insomniacs may hear the Gospel.
4. We in the District office are planning another special *Gate Post* issue for Holy Week. It will contain a devotional page for each day, Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday. Urge your people to share this new issue with friends. Look for it a few days before Palm Sunday.
5. LCMS President Harrison and others are leading weekday devotions on the [LCMS Facebook page](#). Join them live at 9 a.m., or [watch the archived devotions on YouTube](#). Pres. Harrison himself intends to do Holy Week devotions.

On, now, to phase two:

- A. Looking ahead, churches actively producing videos may want to buy domain names like “EasterinSpringfield.com,” “EasterinPeoria.org,” etc. Such websites will be useful for proclaiming Jesus the Resurrection and Life beyond April 12.
- B. As the coronavirus takes its toll more and more, relevancy will not present us our biggest challenge. New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan was just on the *Today* show, talking about God and Jesus His Son – and then, unhappily, recommending a prayer that adherents of all religions can pray! My point is that people will not think of “God-talk” as out of bounds. Let’s position ourselves to give reason for our hope.
- C. Plan! Not only can churches currently be finding volunteers to keep in touch with particularly vulnerable church members, and maybe still other volunteers who might serve these church members (delivering food, etc., when appropriate), but churches can also identify members willing to engage the community. Now is the time for churches to figure out what they can offer. To do service of love besides Gospel proclamation, it is possible to coordinate with churches of differing confessions in your community, cooperating *in externis* to extend mercy and care to those in need.
- D. Even small starts can be significant. Ring doorbells in your neighborhood, stand back, and tell the people who come to the door that you would like to help them if you can. Can you pick up groceries for them? Or check on (healthy) kids while their mom the nurse is at work? Attached to the e-mail message with which you got this newsletter is a card you can leave, to serve much the same purpose.

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Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers