

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



THE ECLIPSE OF GOD

The Solar Eclipse experienced across the continental USA on Monday seemed an analogy for much of the news feeds that played out in the preceding week.

The media had reported on the planned removal of a Statue of General Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville Virginia; which morphed into images of alt- right protestors, Neo Nazis, White Supremacists, KKK; clashing with Black lives Matter protestors, and the ensuing mayhem, violence, pepper spraying, road rage and ultimately murder. This was followed by reports of a terrorist attack in Barcelona, and then

by the shooting of six police officers around our country, two of them fatally.

One thing all of these stories had in common was vitriol, hate, and finger pointing. When others are demonized, pigeon-holed, and 'blamed,' common sense and decency always take a back seat.

The Solar Eclipse was experienced in different ways, depending on where you were in the country. Some towns experienced a total blackout: *'the crickets started chirping;'* other places only experienced a partial eclipse – it happened but it was almost unperceivable.

The mayhem reported in the media was also an experience of Eclipse. Not of the Sun, but of the Son. In the measure the light of God's love is diminished, hatred and darkness will always increase. Sometimes this is very noticeable, other times it is not, but nevertheless it is happening. Saint Mother Teresa once said "Words and actions that do not increase the light only increase the darkness."

As a small boy growing up in the UK I remember seeing the BBC News reporting on the violence in Northern Ireland. People were bombing each other, there was bloody murder in the streets. Then it dawned on me, I think I was nine years old, that those killing each other were all Christians – the Protestant Orangemen versus the Catholic IRA. How could it have come to that, I thought.

The same way the alt. right can hate snowflakes, or a police officer can be gunned down, or a driver from Ohio can feel justified in murdering someone in Charlottesville, or a conservative can hate a liberal, or a Democrat can loathe a Republican.

In the measure, we lose contact with the truth of who we all are, that is, created in the image and likeness of God, light from light, darkness can invade the heart and justify the vilification of others, especially those who do not hold my views.

The antidote is found in the Gospels, of last Sunday, and this Sunday. Jesus breaks down all the prejudices which become ingrained when people experience an Eclipse of the heart. He is the light of the world. In him we discover, we rediscover, that no matter who we are, – black, white, liberal, conservative, - we are children of one Father.

Fr. Sean