

# REFLECTION FROM . . .



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## FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

One of the most beautiful traditions of our Catholic faith is the sacred music that has been passed down to us. One of my favorite experiences during my time at Saint Meinrad were the opportunities to join the monastic community for prayer and being able to listen to the monks sing the various prayer chants. More recent additions to our Catholic music tradition are the different hymns that are used for liturgies and one of my favorite hymns is “Faith of our Fathers” that was written in 1849. I have been thinking about that hymn a lot lately during our quarantine time together especially reflecting on the second verse of the hymn: “Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark, Were still in heart and conscience free: How sweet would be their children’s fate, If they, like them, could die for thee!” As Catholics it is easy to forget that we share in a long tradition of being imprisoned for the faith. We see this from the very beginning as we read about Saint Paul’s missionary journeys and Saint Peter leading the Church in Rome. Some more recent examples include Cardinal Francis Xavier Van Thuan who was imprisoned for 13 years with 9 of those years being in solitary confinement and Saint Maximilian Kolbe who was sent to and imprisoned at Auschwitz before he was martyred. Learning from our forefathers we see how imprisonment was often the defining moments in their witness of the Gospel to the world.

In many ways being in quarantine has given us all a small taste of what it is like to be imprisoned. Our freedom to travel and gather has been limited during this time but thankfully we do not have the full experience of imprisonment where even our food and other basic necessities are handled by other people. These challenging times have been hard for all of us, but our Catholic faith can help us to see the many hidden graces that God is still raining down on us. One of those graces that I hope we all grow in is a deeper awareness of how important it is to share in community. None of us can function as an island onto ourselves and being separated from one another shows us how life giving our community life is. At the same time, we have an opportunity to grow in our awareness that our communion with each other goes deeper than we realize. Whenever I teach about the Church one of the most important parts that I emphasize is the different parts of the Church. The Church has 3 parts: the Church militant which is the Church on Earth, the Church suffering which is the Church in purgatory, and the Church triumphant which is the Church in Heaven. Our spiritual communion with each other on Earth as well as our communion with our family in purgatory and Heaven is a major source of strength that we often ignore, so this quarantine time is a powerful opportunity to tap into this ever-present spiritual reality. So as we continue to pray for each other we can also offer our sufferings and hardships for each other as we all grow in our experience of redemptive suffering. May our Risen Lord continue to purify us and strengthen us as we carry our daily crosses.