

THEME: - THE ROLE OF CHURCH IN SHAPING PEACE IN THE POST COVID-19 WORLD

Stanley Victor Paskavich once said, "I've always wondered how much can you do for your fellow man if your hands are constantly stuck together in Prayers for them?"

The word 'church', literally, is a building for public Christian worship, or otherwise, the whole body of Christian believers. The church is a home for all to come together, regardless of the depth or height of our testimony. As Henry Ward Beecher said, it is not a gallery or an exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school of education for the imperfect ones!

Communion of believers is one of the greatest characteristics of the followers of Christ. The ability to foster fellowship marks the daily lives of our communities and our world. Rather than a social group we belong and go to, the church is our 2nd family.

Every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt at the Church's very heart. The church must turn its eyes towards the hurdles encountered by the community and strengthen fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has posed significant challenges. All churches had to temporarily suspend their movements, and find new ways of reaching out to their congregations online. The virus is more than a nuisance; it's an absolute threat to humanity. These are the days of abnormal fear, confusion, distress, and hopelessness with mounting complexities in human health, economic security, social life, and ultimate objectives.

The commission of the church extends even amidst this crisis. The church must continue to be transmitters of hope and peace. In a normal church day, we sit and pray unitedly. We attend the divine mass together. We listen to the words of enlightenment poured out by our priest.

Satan may have seen this as an opportunity to close our fellowships and churches. But on the contrary, we can design one in every home.

God has a plan in mind. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Yes! This is a 100% guarantee given to all mankind on earth. This promise inspires us and we can look forward to a better tomorrow. The church must assure and

comfort the individuals with enlightening messages from the word of God, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths.

"God shall supply all our needs according to his riches in Glory". We've all heard this lovely lyric and verse, ever since our childhood. Many Christians today are disturbed and anxious about their future and goals. Christ has always been with us. He is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. Churches must pray unceasingly, especially before taking a decision. Wait upon the Lord's answer and spend quality time with our Heavenly Father. Priests must actively engage with the parish members and be a part of their heart-rending circumstances.

'Exhorting one another' is one of the things that we should practice as a church. Boost our companions and help them endure this pandemic with peace and hope. Love involves having feelings of genuine empathy which leads to being selfless and more concerned about others. Good deeds refer to acts of benevolence that help others but need individual efforts and sacrifice from our side.

We should also stretch out a hand of love and relief towards our neighborhood, during this uproar.

- Help others to meet their basic needs.
- Provide mental health support to the weary.
- Bear one another's burden, and fulfill the law of Christ.
- Share the Good News, so that you don't meet your savior empty-handed, before the throne of grace.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "We live by faith, and not by sight". The world may turn upside down, or even worse. Despite that, let's strengthen ourselves and our fellow beings.

So as an individual, a family, and as a church, let the Holy Spirit enable us to focus on the message of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**"Therefore you shall be perfect just as your Father in Heaven is perfect,"
(Matthew 5:48).**