

Homily – Feast of Our Lady of Good Health of Velankanni with Indian Community – St. Matthew Catholic Church – September 9, 2023

Do you love God? That did not sound too convincing. Do you love God? “We know that all things work for good for those who love God...” (Rom). Not everything goes as planned in our lives, right? We know that too well. Ultimately, we will all end in the same place: the cemetery. Nonetheless, we would not like for this earthly life to have no end. The monotony would become unbearable. With that in mind, our death becomes a blessing, although I am sure everyone here would like to postpone it indefinitely for now. What do we really want? There seems to be a contradiction in our very existence.

We heard in the gospel about the moment in history when God’s eternity appeared to enter our limited time. However, we know that something greater cannot enter into something smaller. What really happened is that God came to us so that we could get to Him. “God is with us.” We are with God. We live in the fullness of time. Moreover, as St. John says, “we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (1 Jn 3:2).

We came to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Good Health of Velankanni. She speaks to you about your roots and to the world about God’s healing power. When Jesus heals, he not only cures bodily illnesses. He heals the soul, bringing it closer to himself. He is the firstborn, as St. Paul describes him to the Romans. So, while Our Lady of Velankanni can – and certainly does – intercede for people’s health and reminds you of your cultural roots, she does something

much greater. She connects us to our ultimate root, Christ the firstborn, and brings us closer to a healing that transcends all the contradictions of this life.

Pope Francis has witnessed to the fact that *“Over thousands of years India has been permeated by the desire for truth, the search for the divine, the effort at goodness and kindness.”* Our Lady of Velankanni communicates all of that. Our Lady of Velankanni dignifies you beyond anything you can find in this world. She is a safe path to love God as she does, which in turn brings peace and joy. Just as she was the path for “true life” to enter the world, she is the path for us to find the eternity we ultimately desire, full endless happiness. This community already reflects some of that with your joy and purity of heart. The good health that she offers us is the glory of God for which He predestined us.

“We know that all things work for good for those who love God...” (Rom). And they are easier for those who love the Mother of God. Even so, she requires our disposition. Like she did with the boys in Velankanni, she asks for some of our “buttermilk” – so to speak. We need to be generous to her, but we will never be able to defeat her in generosity. The more we offer her, the more our cup will be filled to the brim. Be ever closer to her; promote her devotion and you will be rewarded.

I thank Our Lady of Velankanni for the priests, religious sisters and lay faithful Catholics we have received from India in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. May she continue to bless us, bring us good health and make you proud of your roots.