

There was once an old Chinese farmer who had a horse to plough his fields. One morning he woke up to discover the horse had run away during the night. Seeing this his neighbor said, “That’s terrible. What are you going to do now?”

The farmer who was a wise man replied, “Good news, bad news, who can say?” A couple of days later, the horse returned, accompanied by another horse. This time the neighbor said, “What great good fortune.” The farmer’s response was the same, “Good news, bad news, who knows?”

The farmer gave the second horse to his son but soon afterwards, the horse threw him and he broke his leg. Seeing this, the neighbor said to the farmer, “So sorry for the bad news about your son. Who’s going to help you on the farm now?” To which the farmer answered, “Good news, bad news, who can say?”

A week later, war broke out in the province. All the able-bodied young men were drafted to fight. Being injured the farmer’s son was spared. The neighbor said, “What a relief that your son doesn’t have to go to war.”

Good news, bad, news, who knows replied the farmer.

As I get older, I make my way to the drug store more often. I’ve been going to the CVS down on Central Ave. When I went there a few days ago I learned the store would close next month. Not long ago St. John’s Lutheran church closed and of course more than ten years ago Our Lady of Angels closed. The Methadone Clinic is located in the midst of all this. The neighborhood down there is steadily declining.

Nationally there are signs of decline as well. We hear that our democracy is in trouble. Free elections are imperiled. Great numbers of people don’t accept election results. Worldwide 50 million people, including millions of babies, face emergency level food needs in order to avoid starvation and death.

Should we just throw in the towel and give up or is it Bad news, good news? We may not be optimistic but we are people of hope. We must trust God. Keep on praying. We can’t solve all these problems but God is in our midst. And then we do all we can to strengthen our country, we welcome our immigrants, we help to feed the poor of our world and love our family. God is our strength – especially Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

Prepare the Way of the Lord.