

November 13, 2020

As the efforts to contain the coronavirus appear to be deteriorating and our public officials make difficult decisions, we must cooperate in any manner that we can or are called upon to.

If the capacity of an indoor religious gathering is reduced, we will immediately abide by that and then reschedule additional Masses as needed to accommodate those who wish to come to Mass but that will not be immediate, so please be cautious and please be patient.

I am reading much on the short term and long-term effects of continued stress and in general no one knows as we have never experienced the stress we are under now either individually or collectively as we have been these last 10 months.

The closest some writers come to what many of us are experiencing is the effects on people who live in dependent circumstances in long term care facilities which are marked by withdrawal into less and less interaction with their environment.

I know many of us have been in such facilities and experience the rawness of a resident crying out, "Help! Help!" knowing that there will be no answer, no satisfying answer coming to help.

Loneliness and lack of interpersonal interaction and communication are terribly debilitating and extremely damaging to any of us.

Residents lose contact with other people who mutually assist one another make their way through the stress like lighthouses blinking seafarers safely home but for many residents of care facilities there is no home to be blinked to and, I can only imagine, the despair that sets in, usually a silent and solitary despair because no one wants to talk about it.

Please take care of yourselves as it looks like things will be getting bleaker before they get better. Resist the ego drive to do whatever you want to do, we can clearly see where that has landed us.

Use this time to consider what is important to you, actually take time and, if you are brave, make a list of what is important to you, then, make a list of who is important to you. Refer to those lists from time to time and see what rereading them does for you or to you.

Above all, walk outside when you are able, your inner life is strange but your relationship with nature need not be. Listen to music for the same reasons, inside may be distorted and stressed but your relationship to your favorite music, your favorite songs, can be normal.

We have a number of beautiful renditions of new and favorite music by our own music ministry folks, listen, remember, and hope.

There are those who think prayer alerts God to whatever it is that troubles us, but Jesus is quite clear about that, "God knows what you need before you ask," so do not ask. Just be silent and be still

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Contemplate what it is that troubles you and think about what good might come from what you call a "trouble or worry but from, perhaps, the point of view of God is actually what you need now. Think about that and do not make up your own rules try and take

Jesus at his word, “Do not rattle on like the pagans, Your Heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask.”

If that is true, all of what we may call “praying” is just words for the wind, that is all. You can say them until you are blue in the face but nothing will change but if you stop and be still and just contemplate your dilemma or fear or problem, and do that often, you may find yourself changing, not what you fear or what you are troubled by changing but you.

In all honesty, though, I must tell you that therapists and spiritual directors and counsellors tell us that in these times it is very, very difficult to contemplate or think clearly or be still and silent but try. Do not despair of trying, do not.