

Friends, there is no doubt that we are living in very trying times. It is very tempting in these days to surrender ourselves to a despairing attitude or buy into the panic as we begin to feel the weight of the world's anxiety press down upon us. As Christians we firmly believe and to this day profess that Christ has taken that very weight of the world on His own shoulders and indeed is taking it on His shoulders here and now again, precisely for us who live in days of struggle.

Remember this and find strength in it: GOD IS UNSHAKEN.

St. Paul, while suffering in a Roman prison, wrote to his fellow Christians of how they are to face the threats that oppressed them: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord**" (Romans 8:35-39).

Like Paul we have been called to be physically confined and physically distanced from our community and each other, but we cannot be separated from each other for we are very and truly united still to each other in Christ as members of His Body, as brothers and sisters of our Heavenly Father. We are not far from each other in our prayers and in prayer we are not far from God.

During these days our souls should flourish with faith and we should become living conduits of this faith ministering even via social media, the phone, our own homes to those filled with anxiety or fear. As rational people we must be smart as well during these days, for did not our Lord say that we should be as clever as serpents but innocent as doves? (Matthew 10:16) This means not entertaining a false bravado or treating this virus and its rapid ability to spread with a cavalier attitude. That is not the work of charity. We must be aware of the needs of others and our own responsibility to stay healthy so that prayerfully they might remain healthy as well. We need to be careful these days, but we cannot at the same time let the Devil and his lies about our current plight turn into a full-blown doomsday scenario. As the father of lies he loves confusion and panic. Recognize his contagious temptations at work and 'socially distance' yourself from him, keeping our wits and hearts clean with the renewing spring of the Lord's strength. We must be wise but never imprudent. Brave but never boastful. The Sacrifice of Christ has bought us the guarantee of hope, and hope does not disappoint.

Remember: GOD IS IN CHARGE.

What the are we to do these days? If some of our neighbors next door or neighbors around the world pass from this world to the next, then we must pray for them and for God's mercy upon them. Pray for all healthcare workers, doctors, first responders, and people working in public office. They are on the front lines fighting for our wellbeing and they need the support of our prayers.

Make a spiritual communion each day with the Lord. Here's a good way:

*My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart and flood it with the warmth of Your own Sacred Heart. I embrace You as if You were already here and I unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.*

Pray to our patrones, The Blessed Mother, each day. Here is how Pope Francis is praying:

*O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick. At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need. We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana in Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's Will and to do what Jesus tells us: He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.*

*We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.*

Pray an Act of Contrition each day (Morning and Evening) in sorrow for our own sins and for those of the whole world, especially for those who may die that day.

*O my God, I am sorry with all my heart for having offended You, and I detest all of my sins because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Your grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.*

Stop by the Parish Hall and pray to Jesus in the Eucharist and gaze upon Him in adoration and He resides in the tabernacle in the midst of all of this for us.

*O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving, be at every moment thine.*

If you can, take this time at home to minister to your own families. Enjoy them and their company. Play games. Take a walk! Read a book or two (or three). Give jigsaw puzzles a try; they're actually pretty fun. Do some baking and make something lovely to bring some joy. Be silly; it's a good treatment for the overly serious. Get some good rest and build up your immune system.

Practically speaking, if you are in trouble at home and need food, or toiletries, or medications and you cannot get out or do not think it wise to go out, call the rectory and we will help you. If you are feeling fine and you want to do some errands for people, please call us. I am sure that as the days go by your help will be needed.

Our number here is 203-744-5777.

We shall be back to normal by God's grace and mercy. We will endure.

*The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.  
In green pastures he makes me lie down; to still waters he leads me;  
He restores my soul. He guides me along right paths for the sake of His name.*

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;  
Your rod and your staff comfort me.*

*You set a table before me in front of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

*Indeed, goodness and mercy will pursue me all the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for endless days (Psalm 23).*

Remember: GOD IS WITH US.

Know of our prayers for you all.

Father Corey and Father Wolfe