

My Friends in the Lord Jesus,

United in heart, in faith, and in loving concern, we may be separated, but yet one. Being ever mindful of the guidelines from health officials to do our part to help “flatten the curve” of COVID - 19, the Corona virus, let us follow them for our own wellbeing and out of compassion for the health of others. United in this effort, we are one in heart, faith, and loving concern.

Anxiety and worry seem to be part of life in these stressful days. We all experience anxiety and worry at different times and about different situations. We have concerns for our families, our husbands, wives, children and grandchildren. We worry about the health of elderly parents and other loved ones. We have concern too for our own health and wellbeing.

We are troubled over job stability, finances, and general safety. So many things can rob us of our inner peace. So much seems to challenge our belief in God’s presence or his listening to our prayers. Anxiety and worry seem to be part of everyday life, most especially now, and can disturb the inner peace of our hearts, minds, and souls.

May I suggest some things to do to lessen stress in ourselves and others:

Take breaks from news stories about the Corona virus. Facts are important, but with a twenty-four hour news cycle, too much can feel overwhelming.

Take time to unwind. Take time to pray, meditate, and to do enjoyable activities.

Stay connected with family and friends. Use various means of technology to communicate with neighbors, especially elderly people, who may enjoy a simple phone call or other means of safe communication.

Do kind things. Being kind and considerate brings out the best in us, makes us feel good about ourselves. Positive is positive!

Let us also be mindful of those who are health professionals, researchers and first responders. Helping other families while caring for your own can increase stress. We are grateful for these healthcare professionals, researchers and first responders. Let us support them by prayer, asking the Lord’s blessing for their peace and wellbeing.

In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul acknowledges the reality of anxiety and worry. He encourages us to trust in God. “Brothers and sisters: Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, make your petitions known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” As a spiritual exercise, let me recommend that you express your anxiety and worry to God in prayer as often as necessary. It is a way to open our hearts to God’s strength and peace.

May God’s Word, in these following passages from sacred scripture, be a source of strength and consolation:

“I command you: be firm and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go.” (Book of Joshua)

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear? The Lord is my life’s refuge; of whom should I be afraid? (Psalm 27)

“I will call upon God, and the Lord will save me. In the evening, and at dawn, and at noon, I will grieve and moan, and he will hear my voice.” (Psalm 55)

“Anxiety in a man’s heart depresses it, but a kindly word makes it glad.” (Proverbs 12:25)

“I can do all things in him who strengthens me.” (St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians)

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life...And which of you being anxious can add one cubit to his life span...Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day’s own trouble be sufficient for the day. (Jesus, the Gospel according to Matthew)

“For though the fig tree blossom not nor fruit be on the vines, though the yield of olives fail and the terraces produce no nourishment, though the flocks disappear from the fold and there be no heard in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord and

exult in my saving God. God, my Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet swift as those of hinds and enables me to go upon the heights. (Book of the Prophet Habakkuk)

Fr. Ron