

Covid-19 and Me.

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The disciples were in the boat on the Lake. A storm blew up and the disciples were fearful. Waking Jesus up they asked him “do you not care that we are about to drown?” The response of Jesus was “O you of little faith.” He quieted the storm and they were in awe. Mk 4:35

Now this year of 2020 we as a church are in Peter’s Bark. Yes, there is a storm all around us Covid-19. Are we afraid? Probably and yet where is our faith?

Remember the words of Jesus again “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid.” Mt 10:29

As a church and as we meet the challenge of Covid-19, we are not alone. Nothing happens to us that God is not aware of.

It is reasonable to feel helpless, hopeless and begin to have “dooms day” thinking. Yet, the Lord is with us. Every time there is public prayer we say “the Lord be with you.” Surely it is more than words. The Lord is truly with us. His Mom too. She was at the Cross, in the Upper Room and present at Pentecost.

We do live in a dangerous world. There is much threat to human life. I recall reading of 7 different ways that planet earth comes to an end. But this virus is not a planet killer. Indeed the science seems to point to a range of results of the disease. The fatality rate goes from about 1% among the healthy population to perhaps 10% in the at-risk population. Please check the numbers for yourself.

The point to be made is that the risk is somewhat similar to other threats to human life, cancer, heart disease, diabetes and other ailments.

So now what? Hibernation? Could we learn something from bears? For several months in the year they cut back on their activity. In the midst of their hibernation they breathe less than twice a minute and their heart beats slow to once every 14 seconds.

Nature has much to teach us. We need much less than we think to live. I recall watching the Soccer World Cup in 1966 between England and Germany. The announcer spoke about how little the players needed to eat in order to play the final game.

In our moment of trial, our needs are not many. There is a proverb “a simple life is its own reward.” Human life has not been around for 3 million years without our ability to adapt to change and circumstance.

What then might we do? This is a time of self help. Each of you is very resourceful, more than you realize. God has given you many gifts. Before we throw ourselves on the divine, we must first use our human ingenuity.

We all tend to worry, but we must not let the merry-go-round in our heads take over. To stop the cascade of thoughts, I ask you to get some paper and write out your thoughts.

Keep writing until you exhaust the troubling ideas. Then spread the sheets out on a table and ask, is this reasonable? Does the science confirm your worries?

A favorite Australian phrase is “no worries, Mate.”

Talk to someone. It helps to vent. Most people are willing to listen and challenge what does not make sense.

Eat regular meals. You don't always need filet mignon. I have an extra bag or two of oatmeal. Maybe I will lose a few pounds!!

Get plenty of Sleep. Pope John XXXIII is reputed to have said “Goodnight Lord. It is your Church, I am going to bed.”

Become part of a 24 hour rosary chain. The rosary is a great anti-dote to worry. Even the Buddhists use “prayer beads.”

A good parish is aware of the need to pray for the world. No prayer goes un-answered.

We have a shared time here on earth and a shared destiny among the saints. We must not see ourselves as “lone rangers.” No man is an island as the song goes.

Start a phone tree with neighbors and parish members. Make a regular schedule for each day and keep to it. There should be a rhythm to life. Try to be boring.

Pull out those old music CD's that you have not listened to for some time. It can be very calming.

Is there a story teller in your family? Rediscover a lost art form of embellishing and enhancing imagination.

Tom Sloyan my deceased neighbor was a practitioner of story telling to pass the winter nights.

Have you thought about learning a new language? After a month or two you may be saying Parlez Vous Francais? So sign up for Rosetta Stone.

This storm will pass and Peter's Bark will soon sail on smooth waters with fair winds. And Jesus will say to us “O you of little faith.”