

It is very nice to have Tracy's help doing this direct communication with you.

I am increasingly optimistic as I hear reports from around the country that we are going to get past the anxiety and fear that this outbreak of COVID-19 has caused. I am hoping that President Trump is correct is that we can turn a corner on this virus before Easter. Let me share some reasons for my optimism.

First is the remarkable response of the faith community in this country. There has been a great outpouring of prayer to God, and by Catholics to our Lady, Protectress, the Blessed Virgin Mary, for help in overcoming this threat.

Second is the emergence of several drugs to treat the severe cases of this virus. I have now seen testimonies on T.V. of several persons who were apparently on death's door, then were given the drug and were out of danger in 48 hours. The CDC and the State of New York have established patterns for using these drugs, experimentally, at least, on a large scale. We should have some solid data very soon that demonstrates that we have an effective way to treat this illness.

Third is the testimony of a group of doctors with which I have a contact in Lubbock, Texas. They strongly feel that the seriousness of this virus is being overstated. The real morbidity rate of this virus may well turn out to be not much more different than influenza. This remains to be proved but the numbers seem to be going in that direction.

Fourth, the data coming in from Italy needs to be more carefully understood. I have an Italian doctor friend whose aged parents still live in Italy. Italy has a single-payer, socialized medical system. The system is underfunded and not very effective. But there is a high number of deaths among older elements of the population because the guidelines of the system say that if a person is over 72 years of age, you do not get hospitalized but are given medicine and sent home (to die). I offer this as a warning for the fall election concerning those who want a single-payer socialized medical system.

On a local level, our Church remains open between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. for prayer and reflection. I am personally present at the Church office many mornings between 9:30 and 12:30 and in the afternoon from 4:00 to 7:00. Deacon John Ragland is able to offer Eucharistic Adoration every Thursday from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. If you would like confession or encouragement please call for an appointment or drop in.

We have a great advantage over the general population because of our Catholic values: virtue, self-control, willingness to deny ourselves and sacrifice ourselves on behalf of others. Our crucifix reminds us of the love of Jesus, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down

his life for his friend.” What a great attitude for a time of difficulty! I especially invite everyone to reflect on this love and to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at home each day at 3:00.

I believe, therefore, that we can learn the behavior of how to avoid passing infections around, including maintaining personal distance, hand-washing, etc. Let us see how we can grow in faith and in practical life-style modifications to be better prepared for the future.