

March 7, 2020



Dear Parish Family,

With the headlines reporting nothing but bad news the past couple of weeks, it would be all too easy to succumb to fear. This, as I said last Sunday in my homily, is a consequence of original sin. It results from a clouded intellect and disordered will. We want and grasp for control where we have none and this causes us to withdraw and hide ourselves not unlike our first parents, Adam and Eve. We forget, ignore, or don't believe in God's everlasting and unconditional love for us which invites us to trust God always. So how do we move from turn in with fear to reaching out in trust? First, we need to put down the local news and pick up the Good News.

Again and again, the Bible says, "Be not afraid!" Although I have not counted for myself, it reportedly occurs 365 times. That's once for everyday of the year! Second, Jesus says, "Can any of you by worrying add a moment to your life-span? If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest?... Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:25-26, 32 NAB)

St. Padre Pio often said, "Pray, hope, and don't worry!" Of course, this is easier said than done. Our fallen natures want to do just the opposite. Nonetheless, one fundamental, eternal, and universal truth governs all things, namely, nothing happens that God does not elect or allow and all of it is directed by God for our good regardless of whether we know, understand, or believe it. How we respond either reveals the fear of our fallen nature from Adam and Eve or the trust of our redeemed nature from Jesus Christ. In the case of the coronavirus, for example, some have locked their doors and stockpiled toilet paper while others continue to go about their daily routine, practicing better hygiene and enacting reasonable precautions.

Here at St. Monica, we are continuing our daily routine of glorifying God and working out our salvation with Sunday and daily Masses, 24-hour Eucharistic Adoration, Friday Stations of the Cross, the Lenten Parish Mission, many outreach ministries and so on. Furthermore, we have adopted the very best hygienic practices across our entire campus as recommended by the Center for Disease

Control and the Archdiocese of Seattle. All our parish and school staff are cleaning, washing, and wiping surfaces as though we were a hospital! For more information, read the accompanying letter from our Parish Administrator, Greg Mahoney. Lastly, we have postponed or cancelled various gatherings over the next couple of weeks in adherence to recommended precautions. Better safe than sorry.

Finally, let me just say that this, too, will pass! You know this to be true. But, unfortunately, the coronavirus is just one threat among many we will face. Will we allow it to divide and defeat us through fear or will we use it to draw closer to God and each other through trust in Divine Providence? Let us ask our Blessed Mother to marshal the Saints and Angels in this hour of need. I invite you to pray with me daily the prayer I first learned from my mother who prayed it with me whenever I was anxious, confused or fearful. It is the Memorare.

*Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help,
or sought thine intercession
was left unaided.*

*Inspired by this confidence,
I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother;
to thee do I come, before thee I stand,
sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not my petitions,
but in thy mercy hear and answer me.
Amen.*

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Fr. Freitag

Pastor