

Reflection

“Lord, we are assailed by doubts
and weighed down by uncertainties;
release our hearts to journey towards
You with hope;
Lord, grant us Your love.”

(Divine Office, Morning Prayer I)

With so much going on around us in these extraordinary days, stop for a minute or two and quieten down, opening yourself to come into the presence of the Lord; read the text and mull on it, pray what comes to mind.



Stop a Minute

Reflections from Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ

For more reflections go to
www.ofw-adelaide.org.au

To say that we are living in challenging and uncertain times is putting it mildly. The latest news about the spread of the corona virus pandemic, the numbers of casualties and deaths, along with extensive reductions of day to day services, all serve to bring home how serious the world situation is. As we know, on a daily basis, we hear of more closures, greater queues of people unemployed overnight and needing to register for benefits, while becoming increasingly aware of the impact of all of the above on our own lives, our hopes, our dreams and need for community. Our Churches are closed; we cannot meet to celebrate the Eucharist and other sacrament preparations and celebrations are on hold until further notice.

Despite the seriousness and pain experienced at many levels, there are some hopeful signs each day. Random acts of kindness are being encouraged and named; people are being encouraged to make contact by phone, email and even card and letter-writing to those isolated in nursing homes. Families are becoming creative about 'virtual' gatherings to remember loved ones and mark significant occasions where it no longer safe to meet physically. All of us are needing to learn the discipline of staying safe and keeping others safe by self-isolating; all of us are being challenged to find ways to support small businesses and the least advantaged among us.

On March 25th, under normal circumstances, we would have gathered to celebrate the solemnity of the feast of the Annunciation. In a recent book entitled: 'The Gospel of Matthew: A Spiritual and Pastoral Reading,' Pope Francis reflects on the life of Mary and reminds us of her role in the life of the Church. He describes Mary as the Mother of hope. In her assent to God, her 'let it be done to me....' was an expression of trustful openness to God's Word and a sign of hope. By agreeing to become the Mother of Jesus, Mary placed her trust in God and is for us an icon of hope for the future.

Despite the many challenges, difficulties and times of questioning, Mary's hope remained steadfast. Mary was so attuned to the presence of God in her life that God's Word found a home in her. The Scriptures remind us that Mary pondered all things important in her heart; her hope was nourished by listening, contemplating and being patient, sure in the knowledge that God was doing great things through her.

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The Second Vatican Council affirmed Mary as Mother of the Church, and Pope Francis reminds us:

“We owe so much to this Mother! She is present at every moment in the history of salvation, and in her we see a firm witness to hope. She, the Mother of hope, sustains us in times of darkness, difficulty, discouragement – in times of seeming or actual human defeat. May Mary, our hope, help us to make of our lives a pleasing offering to the Heavenly Father, and a joyful gift to our brothers and sisters, with an attitude that always looks forward to tomorrow.” (P. 130)

In these difficult days, Pope Francis and our leaders are calling on people to pray for one another and for our world; the prayer of the Rosary has long been a source of comfort and prayer for millions of Catholics across the world, and no doubt, in these times when we are not permitted to go to our churches, many will again take up the Rosary as a form of prayer. Following the example of Mary, may we unite ourselves to the wider community beyond the isolations we are now experiencing, and pray with hopeful hearts to God, through Mary, that there will soon be an end to this pandemic.

Kathy Horan
RCIA Coordinator



Online Resources

There are a number of resources available to assist with daily prayer and reflection, as well as online Mass services. Please go to the Adelaide Archdiocese or the Office for Worship websites for details.

www.adelaide.catholic.org.au

www.ofw-adelaide.org.au

Catechumens:

Regretfully, those Catechumens preparing to be fully initiated into the Church at the Easter Vigil this year, and Candidates for full communion with the Church will need to wait until the present crisis has passed. This is in keeping with the restrictions announced on 24th March.

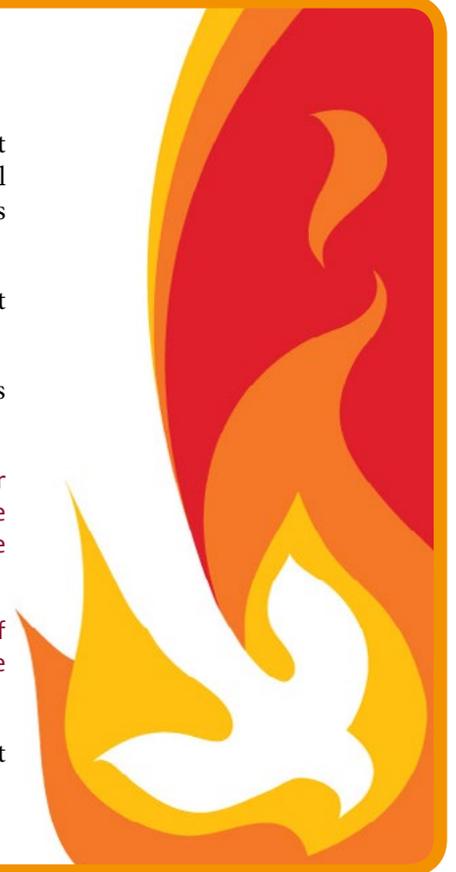
It will be important though, that at the local level you keep in some kind of contact with your RCIA group, e.g via phone call etc.

I detail for you the way these new restrictions will affect us for the present, and this comes from Fr. Philip Marshall's letter:

Baptisms: are not permitted for the time being. In cases of danger or death or urgent pastoral necessity a baptism may be celebrated with no more than the parents and two godparents present with the minister, ensuring that all hygiene and social distancing regulations are observed.

Sacraments of Initiation: are to be deferred except in individual cases of danger of death or urgent pastoral necessity, in which case only the catechumen/candidate and sponsor may be present with the minister.

Please feel free to make contact via email if you need any further clarification about these matters khoran@ow.adelaide.catholic.org.au



LOCKDOWN

-from Richard Hendrick (Brother Richard) in Ireland

March 13th 2020

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.
But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

[Access a downloadable copy](#)

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