

## PASTORAL MESSAGE

For 3/21/20

I hope that you are well, and I hope that all is well for your family and friends. This is a time when you may be focused on health concerns. Or you may be concerned about not being able to get or have those things that make life seem normal. It helps to remember that the Christian faith offers a map through life. It works.

For instance, Lent is a yearly intentional time for fasting, meditation, and reflection. But these intentional acts are not limited to Lent. There are no church restrictions saying we must “only” do these things during Lent. These acts are also ideally suited for a time of quarantine or isolation.

Food fasting means less trips to the store. Studies show that times of fasting can increase health. Fasting from being a “couch potato” in front of the tv or computer, has health benefits. Get out into your yard, walk around the home or apartment, do some calisthenics. Healthy bodies weather storms of viruses, the flu, and colds more easily than unhealthy ones do.

Meditation takes us away from the tv and computer. It is easy to be overwhelmed by everyone talking about what they are doing in this crisis. Governments, businesses, organizations, and even churches are committed to telling us about what they are doing in this time. Healthy meditation seeks to become aware of “what God is doing.”

Reflect on what God might be *inviting you to do* at this moment. As you reflect on the lives of those around you, who could use a prayer sent their way? Who could use a phone call or a note? What might we do differently, to live like Jesus?

On Wednesday night, I was once again a hospital Chaplain. In the late night hours, I sat with a person whose life and marriage was unraveling by the minute. They had no control over what was happening to them. As they updated family by texting, my eyes moved to a picture on the waiting room wall. A lotus flower sat on a body of water. Plant stems, some healthy and green, others now brown and fading from existence, were visible. The photographer had not sanitized the picture, removing anything that might imply that death is present. God’s good creation has both death and renewal in it.

Studies show that being in nature, or even looking at a picture of nature, brings calmness and healing to our bodies and lives. We are reminded that life will continue. The blossoms of spring arise from a barren ground. God’s good creation has both death and renewal in it.

We await the retelling of the resurrection on Easter morning. Death did not win then, and will not win today.

Seek to de-stress. Seek to grow in your Christian walk. Throughout the ages, Christians who projected a trust in God, and calmness of spirit, in the midst of societal turmoil, have blessed those around them.

Be at peace. And know that God is near.

Peace and blessings,  
Pastor Chris