

7. We're Obligated To Care For Those "On The Peripheries"

As I've said, here, too, I'm echoing a theme dear to the heart of Pope Francis. The pains caused by the pandemic will fall particularly hard on the poor, the elderly and the chronically ill. We Christians have a particular duty to care for them. One simple but much needed work of mercy will be to stay in touch (by phone?) with the elderly who are quarantined. We should be sure that "social distancing" doesn't result in losing "spiritual closeness." Not least should we remember that many of the inconveniences we experience in order to mitigate the spread of the virus are aimed at protecting the vulnerable. With that in mind it should be easier to be at peace with these inconveniences.

8. Read God's Word Through The Lens Of This Time

The Psalmist says, "O that today you would hear his voice" (Ps 95: 7). As you read any passage of Sacred Scripture that is part of your prayer during these days, listen especially for how in his word God is speaking directly to you about how to find the grace he offers in this time. (See n. 1 above). He wants to speak to your heart: to offer his wisdom about what this crisis means, his guidance about how to respond, his assurance that all things work for good for those who love [him]" (Rm 8: 28). He is close; listen for him.

9. Our First "Touchstone" Is Eucharistic Communion

During this time when the public celebration of Holy Mass has to be suspended, we need the graces of the Eucharist more than ever. For these are the graces whereby the Holy Spirit works in our lives that dying to self and living for the Father that is Jesus's Paschal Mystery. These graces can be available to us through Spiritual Communion. Please pray for Spiritual Communion in the fruits of Christ's sacrifice at least every Sunday, if not more often. And gather as a family to pray together for this Communion.

10. Our Second "Touchstone" Is Our Lady's Protection

From the cross Jesus gave us his Mother to be ours. In every age – from the days before Pentecost until today – the Church has been blessed through the Mother of God interceding for us, from her being close to us with her care and protection. Let us renew our commitment to "fly to her protection." I invite you to join with me in praying the "Memorare" every day to commend not only the Church but also our country, indeed the whole world, to the loving care of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And, I follow the admonitions of Bl. Solanus, "thanking God ahead of time" for the graces he will give us in answer to her prayers, and I will work to build a Lourdes Grotto on the grounds of our Cathedral as a token of appreciation for what I am sure he will do for us through her intercession.

CONCLUSION

"Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus" (Heb 12:1)

That's the best way I can summarize what I believe we need to do to come out of this pandemic as the daughters and sons God calls us to be.

Keep focused on Jesus' example of abandonment into the hands of God the Father.

Keep close to Jesus in prayer.

Keep confident that Jesus is with us in this time of trial.

Keep at peace, for Jesus is Lord, conqueror of sin and death, victor over every evil.