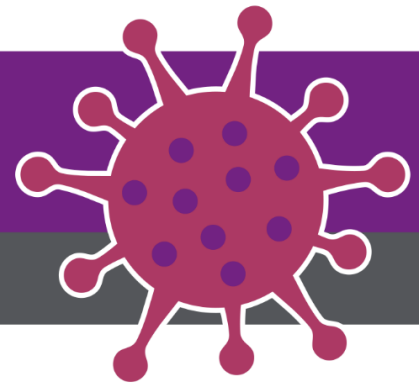


# CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

More reflections in the time of COVID-19



**Audience:** All Colleagues

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Compiled by Michigan Mission Integration  
*Please send others to Michael Sanderl, Chief Mission Officer*

## A Reflection by Donna Ashworth

History will remember when the world stopped  
And the flight stayed on the ground  
And the cars parked in the street  
And the trains didn't run.

History will remember when the schools closed  
And the children stayed indoors  
And the medical staff walked towards the fire  
And they didn't run.

History will remember when the people sang  
On their balconies, in isolation  
But so very much together  
In courage and song.

History will remember when the people fought  
For their old and their weak  
Protected the vulnerable  
By doing nothing at all.

History will remember when the virus left  
And the houses opened  
And the people came out  
And hugged and kissed

And started again

Kinder than before.

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### **A Reflection – Author Unknown, Incident Command Call**

God is saying to you today, "You held on during the toughest of times. I gave you strength to endure that at times you did not even know it was Me. When things changed for you many left you and wrote you off. But not only did you endure the storm, you grew in the storm. You are different. I did not create you to fit in. I created you to stand out. Now I am about to bless your faithfulness. I am about to take you to levels you never even thought were possible. Receive it in My name."

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### **A Reflection by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ- Patient Trust**

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability and that it may take a very long time.

And so, I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually – let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste.

Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will) will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be.

Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

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### **A Poem by Kathleen O'Meara, Relevant to Today's Times**

Kathleen O'Meara (1839–1888), pen name Grace Ramsay, was an Irish-French Catholic writer and biographer during the late Victorian era. She was the Paris correspondent of *The Tablet*, still a leading British Catholic magazine. This poem appeared in her second novel, *Iza's Story*, about the struggle of Polish patriots against Russian, Austrian and German occupation. The book compares the Polish-Russian situation to the Irish-British situation and praises the revolt of a small nation against a powerful neighbor.

And people stayed home  
and read books and listened  
and rested and exercised  
and made art and played

and learned new ways of being  
and stopped  
and listened deeper

someone meditated  
someone prayed  
someone danced  
someone met their shadow

and people began to think differently  
and people healed  
and in the absence of people who lived in ignorant ways,  
dangerous, meaningless and heartless,  
even the earth began to heal

and when the danger ended  
and people found each other  
grieved for the dead people  
and they made new choices  
and dreamed of new visions  
and created new ways of life  
and healed the earth completely  
just as they were healed themselves

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### **A Reflection by Jan Richardson from '*Circle of Grace*' - Blessing When World is Ending**

Look, the world is always ending somewhere.  
Somewhere the sun has come crashing down.  
Somewhere it has gone completely dark.  
Somewhere it has ended with the gun, the knife, the fist.  
Somewhere it has ended with the slammed door, the shattered hope.  
Somewhere it has ended with the utter quiet that follows the news from the phone, the television, the hospital room.  
Somewhere it has ended with a tenderness that will break your heart.  
But, listen, this blessing means to be anything but morose.  
It has not come to cause despair.  
It is simply here because there is nothing a blessing is better suited for than an ending, nothing that cries out more for a blessing than when a world is falling apart.  
This blessing will not fix you, will not mend you, will not give you false comfort; it will not talk to you about one door opening when another one closes.  
It will simply sit itself beside you among the shards and gently turn your face toward the direction from which the light will come, gathering itself about you as the world begins again.

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## **A Reflection by Willa Cather, Novelist -- There Are Some Things You Learn Best In Calm, And Some In Storm**

Our life, like our planet's life, knows both calm and storm. We experience times when our lake is placid and our sky cloudless. We also encounter days of howling winds and turbulent seas. We live many days in the in-between.

In all times, we can learn to deepen trust.

In times of calm, learning to trust is nuanced. When we are surrounded by tranquility, we can look closely at our environment. We can absorb detail – noticing subtle differences, grasping vital distinctions. We can understand relationships between things and in turn, our relationship to things. With insight, trust can become more practical.

In times of storm, learning to trust is sharpened. In the midst of crisis, we discover what is most basic. Urgency demands our full attention and a shedding of all that is secondary. We learn what matters most; we respond to what we know to be essential. We scan our resources, drawing upon those skills that are needed for immediate safety. We act with our abilities; we rely on our faith; we hope. With focus, trust can become more functional.

In times of storm, learning to trust is inventive. When faced with difficulty, assurance can become dislodged. Uncertainty challenges our confidence and requires us to reach out – to loved ones, to God, to our communities, to those things that have helped us cope in the past. We build pathways back to those sanctuaries or we imagine and create new ways of attaching to those anchors that most deeply secure us. With creative effort, trust can be restored.

All our circumstances can be a chance to grow in trust that ultimately, we will find our way.

What has carried me through storms of the past? How can I trust that refuge today?

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## **A Reflection by Bridget Deegan-Krause, adapted by Jackie Lapinski, Executive Director Performance Excellence, Michigan Region - Entering Into Chaos**

### **The God We Bring**

An important question to ask, as we approach those entrusted to our care, is "Who is the God I bring with me?" Consider the God we know in Catholic health care. There we find a God who enters willingly into the chaos of our world, who chooses to make a home in the midst of woundedness, confusion and darkness — and who finds beauty and blessing there. We know the wisdom that can emerge from struggle, and the sacred power that can be found in the midst of seeming chaos. Our health as individuals and communities depends upon our willingness to enter into the fray, time and again, with and for one another.

Today, make a choice to engage with someone who is struggling. Enter in. Be the presence of mercy that is needed. Do so with the expectancy that God will accompany you and that there may be creativity, compassion,

friendship and other blessings to discover. And trust — wherever there is both chaos and mercy, always, always, there is God.

"Reflect today on where the chaos in the lives of those around you may invite your presence. Make a commitment to enter in with mercy, whether through a loving conversation, a shared meal or a listening ear. You can expect that the experience may be messy, awkward and perhaps even a little frightening. But as you willingly face the chaos experienced by another, you can do so with a spirit of trust and expectancy. You can look for the potential, the beauty and the creative, restorative power in even the most difficult situations. Because where there is both vulnerability and tenderness, we know that God shows up.

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### **A Reflection by Bro. Richard Hendrick, OFM - Lockdown**

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 neighborhood 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 neighbors 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.

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### **A Reflection by Ken Untener, Bishop of Saginaw, 1979 - The Long View**

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.  
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.  
Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying  
that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about:

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an  
opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,  
But that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.

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### **A Reflection by Laura Kelly Fanucci**

When this is over, may we never take for granted:  
A handshake with a stranger  
Full shelves at the store  
Conversations with neighbors  
A crowded theater  
Friday night out  
The taste of communion  
A routine checkup  
The school rush each morning  
Coffee with a friend  
The stadium roaring  
Each deep breath  
A boring Tuesday  
Life itself.

When this ends, may we find that we have become more like the people we wanted to be, we were called to be, we hoped to be; and may we stay that way – better for each other because of the worst.

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**A Morning Huddle Reflection by Rev. Crystal Schmalz, M.Div., BCC, ACPE Certified Educator Associate, St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor**

Some health care workers may feel fear going into work, in addition to their courage for caring for the sick. Most of the health care workers I know are committed to providing the best care with compassion and excellence. Yet, it can still feel scary to expose oneself to some amount of risk. Health care workers have families, children, and loved ones who might be more vulnerable to COVID-19. Health care workers are real people who serve: nurses, doctors, chaplains, social workers, patient care techs, environmental services, food and nutrition, pharmacists, security, and administrators.

So thank you to everyone who is participating in social distancing and helping to reduce the risk for all. Thank you for caring and thinking about more than yourself. As I walk into the hospital this morning, I'm trusting God and praying for the colleagues, patients, and families I may encounter. May God's strength be with us. May God's wisdom help us as we use our own judgment. May God increase our skills and training. May God's presence go before and with us. May God's protection and healing be upon us. May God's peace and comfort abound.

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**A Reflection by Scott Opperman, Director of Mission Integration, Mercy Health St. Mary's**

Yesterday, the award-winning columnist Mitch Album shared that his physician asked him a favor during a recent medical appointment. She requested, "Can you tell everyone to stay calm? To be kind to each other, and not panic?" "People in your position can make a difference," she said.

In his column, Album shared: "[A] dark national mood is dangerous. For society. For the economy. For the future. ... 'It will lead to more panic. More anger. More people grabbing every roll of toilet paper for themselves. ... 'As much as we need to control the spread of the virus, we need to control the spread of hopelessness. It is every bit as debilitating. ... '[M]isinformation can lead to fear, and ... fear can lead to cruelty. ... 'How we handle ourselves the next few months will determine what our nation looks like for the next few years. The dangers of the virus should never be ignored. But neither should the hopefulness of surviving it. I have learned, through decades writing about the subject, that most people can't really envision death. But they react mightily to the threat of it. Fear and depression quickly rise. Anger. Isolation. Doing and saying things they never did before."

MHPP and Saint Mary's have had so much to celebrate this past year, most importantly our remarkable care of patients. That said, there's no denying that it's been an eventful twelve months. Departmental restructures, retirements, changes to anesthesiology services, transformations for our Federally Qualified Health Clinics, transitions to People-Soft and EPIC, parking modifications at the hospital campus, so much else, and now: responding to COVID-19.

It'd be easy for our mood to become dark. To panic. To anger. To be hopeless. To fear. And, unfortunately, to become cruel. If we did, however, we'd lose our soul as a health care ministry that pledges to serve together in the Spirit of the Gospel. Our culture, which is based upon being true to our Mission, living our Values, and excelling in all we do, would erode. Let's promise one another that we're not going to let that happen.

Concretely, to ensure this, I have two asks of everyone. They are based on my past service as chaplain-coach for a college football team. In my role, I constantly asked the players and staff in huddles and team meetings to focus on two behaviors: (1) Solidarity. They needed to value, care for, and work together with all teammates, regardless if they liked one another, were second string, were walk-ons, hurt one another in the past, were freshmen—whatever. They needed to love one another as brothers if they wanted to win a national championship. (2) Mental toughness. They needed to be focused on winning games together. I asked them not to be distracted by refs, opposing fans, past failures, recent successes, romantic relationships, or anything else. The players claimed they won back-to-back national NAIA championships while I was there because of their solidarity and mental toughness. They had always had the talent. Like the University of Saint Francis' football team, MHPP and Saint Mary's have the most talented colleagues. What I think we need right now is solidarity and mental toughness to be true to our Mission, live our Values, and excel in all we do. Solidarity and mental toughness.

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### **A Reflection by Lynn Ungar - Pandemic**

What if you thought of it as the Jews consider the Sabbath – the most sacred of times? Cease from travel. Cease from buying and selling. Give up, just for now, on trying to make the world different than it is. Sing. Pray. Touch only those to whom you commit your life. Center down.

And when your body has become still, reach out with your heart. Know that we are connected in ways that are terrifying and beautiful. (You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives are in one another's hands. (Surely that has come clear.) Do not reach out your hands. Reach out your heart. Reach out your words. Reach out all the tendrils of compassion that move, invisibly, where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love – for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, so long as we shall live.

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### **A Reflection by Gretchen Schmelzer - This Can Be Our Finest Hour-But We Need All Of You**

For most people nationwide and worldwide, this virus is not about you. This is one of those times in life, in history, when your actions are about something bigger. They are about someone else. They are about something greater, a greater good that you may not ever witness. A person you will save who you will never meet.

You may be healthy, and your kids may be healthy. Your parents may be healthy. Everyone around you seems fine. And all the things you planned and the 2020 spring you thought you were going to have has been completely undone. You must work from home. Your conference is cancelled. Your semester is over. Your work is cancelled. It all seems fast, and out-of-proportion and disorienting. You look at each action and think—but it would be okay if I did that. It's not so big. We worked so hard. They would be so disappointed.

Your losses are real. Your disappointments are real. Your hardships are real. I don't mean to make light or to minimize the difficulty ahead for you, your family or community.



But this isn't like other illnesses and we don't get to act like it is. It's more contagious, it's more fatal—and most importantly, even if it can be managed. It can't be managed at a massive scale—anywhere. We need this thing to move slowly enough for our collective national and worldwide medical systems to hold the very ill so that all of the very ill can get taken care of. Because at this time of severe virus there are also all of the other things that require care. There is still cancer, there are still heart attacks, there are still car accidents, there are still complicated births. And we need our medical systems to be able to hold us. And we need to be responsible because our medical systems are made up of people and these amazing health care workers are a precious and limited resource. They will rise to this occasion. They will work to help you heal. They will work to save your mother or father or sister or baby. But in order for that to happen we have very important work to do. ALL OF US.

So what is our work? Yes, you need to wash your hands and stay home if you are sick. But the biggest work you can do is expand your heart and your mind to see yourself and see your family as part of a much bigger community that can have a massive—hugely massive—impact on the lives of other people. I remember the feeling of helplessness after 9/11 and after Hurricane Sandy. I remember how much people wanted to help. I remember how much generosity of spirit there was about wanting to give, wanting to be helpful, wanting to save lives. And many of you have had experiences since then—whether it was a mass shooting, or the wildfires, or floods. There have been times you have looked on and wondered how you could help. And now we ALL have that chance.

You can help by canceling anything that requires a group gathering. You can help by not using the medical system unless it is urgent. You can help by staying home if you are sick. You can help by cooking or shopping or doing errands for a friend who needs to stay home. You can help by watching someone's kid if they need to cover for someone else at work. You can help by ordering take-out from your local restaurants. Eat the food yourself or find someone who needs it. You can help by offering to help bring someone's college student home or house out-of-town students if you have extra rooms. You can help by asking yourself, "What can I and my family do to help?" "What can we offer?" You can help by seeing yourself as part of something bigger than yourself.

When the Apollo 13 oxygen tank failed and the lunar module was in danger of not returning to earth, Gene Kranz, the lead flight director overheard people saying that this could be the worst disaster NASA had ever experienced—to which he is rumored to have responded, "With all due respect, I believe this is going to be our finest hour."

Imagine if we could make our response to this crisis our finest hour. Imagine if a year or two from now we looked back on this and told the stories of how we came together as a team in our community, in our state, in our nation and across the world. Your contribution to the finest hour may seem small, invisible, inconsequential—but every small act of 'not doing' what you were going to do, and 'doing' an act of kindness or support will add up exponentially. These acts can and will save lives. The Apollo 13 crew made it their finest hour by letting go of the word "I" and embracing the word "we." And that's the task required of us. It can only be our finest hour if we work together. You are all on the team. And we need all of you to shine in whatever way you can.

## **A Reflection by Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky, B'nai David-Judea Congregation, a Modern Orthodox synagogue in Los Angeles**

One of the brand-new terms that has entered our daily conversation is "social distancing." It is shorthand, as we know very well, for the practical physical precautions that we all need to and must take in order to protect ourselves and others. I'd humbly suggest though, that we use the term itself sparingly, if at all. Language is a powerful shaper of thinking. And the very last thing we need right now, is a mindset of mutual distancing.

We actually need to be thinking in the exact opposite way. Every hand that we don't shake must become a phone call that we place. Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern. Every inch and every foot that we physically place between ourselves and another, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other, should the need arise. It is obvious that "distancing", if misplaced or misunderstood, will take its toll not only upon our community's strength and resiliency, but upon the very integrity and meaning of our spiritual commitment....

Let's stay safe. And let's draw one another closer in a way that we've never done before.

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## **A Reflection by Greg Sterling, Reverend Henry L. Slack Dean and Lillian Claus Professor of New Testament, Yale Divinity School**

When I was a ministerial intern, the senior minister struggled with pancreatic cancer. One morning he arrived at the church but soon left because he became ill. His wife called to tell me that he had slipped into a coma and was rushed to the hospital, where I quickly joined her. A blood test determined that he had slipped into a diabetic coma as a result of his cancer-damaged pancreas; an insulin shot brought him back to consciousness. As I entered his hospital room that evening, he spoke to me, quoting the Psalter: "This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD, and was saved from every trouble" (34:6). I will never forget that moment. He was a person of great faith, a faith that shaped his outlook on life, on illness, and on death.

We are facing a pandemic that is more threatening than any in our lifetimes, although there have certainly been others that were horrific; e.g., AIDS. All of us are concerned for the welfare of our families, ourselves, our communities, and our world. Does faith matter in such a time and, if so, how? Let me suggest two ways.

Faith enables us to face the uncertain with equanimity. Faith neither naïvely wishes for the impossible nor unrealistically ignores the fact that tragedy can happen to me and to my family. Faith neither panics nor shuts its eyes to reality. Faith neither neglects its moral responsibilities nor acts with foolhardy abandon in the face of danger. Faith is the quiet confidence that no matter what we face, God will give us strength to face it. It is serenity in circumstances that lend themselves to stampedes. It is the calm to look for answers when others can only formulate questions. The longer I have lived, the more the statement of Paul has meant to me: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39). I hold on to this with increasing confidence.

Faith is, however, more than confidence in God and God's love; it is a life motivated to serve on the basis of that confidence. It is praying for those who are ill, praying for those who are working in health care, praying for those developing a vaccine, and praying for those around the world who are making decisions that impact all of

us. It is taking steps to help the economically disadvantaged whose challenging circumstances will be made more worse by this crisis. It is self-sacrifice in a time of crisis rather than self-advancement. It is doing all that we can to keep ourselves healthy and out of the hospitals that will be overcrowded with the ill. It is curtailing our own plans so that we do not endanger others. It is staying in touch with those in our ambit of acquaintances who may be lonely in times of enforced isolation. It is a call "to work for the good of all" (Gal 6:10).

Only when we don't know the future do we really know if we have faith. This crisis will test our faith. It will reveal our confidence in God and God's love. It will reveal our love for one another, for those we know and those we do not know. I am confident that, like the senior minister with whom I worked, faith will shape our outlooks on life, on illness, and on death. May God's peace be with you.

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### **Reflection...Qarrtsiluni: Sitting Together in the Dark**

Contributed by Julie Carter, St. Mary's Athens

Yesterday I stumbled across this word and I couldn't get it out of my mind: "Qarrtsiluni." It is an Inuit word that means "sitting together in the dark, waiting for something to happen." I kept trying to imagine the culture in which people are sitting together in the dark waiting for something to happen so often that they needed a special word for it!

Later in the day, I learned that folks in the community drove to Sacred Heart Hospital Wednesday night, encircling the front with their headlights, and from their cars they prayed for the patients and colleagues inside.

If this pandemic is our "dark," we are not waiting for something to happen. We are sitting together in the dark and wrapping each other in prayers – from COVID-19 appropriate distances. We are sewing masks, checking in on each other, sharing resources, bringing food to the elderly, and showing up for each other in countless ways. We don't have a single word for this, we have many words for this. Love. Solidarity. Generosity. Perseverance. Courage. Selflessness. Faith. Hope. And though this darkness may seem impenetrable right now, when together we throw enough of these words at the darkness, the light will once again take over.

*As of 3/30/20*