



Reflection from Fr. Garry 3/29/2020

All That We Need

I really do not know how my mother did it. While my dad was out doing the farm work during daylight hours, my mom took care of us five kids. We were all two years apart in age, so that means that at one time, there were five kids under the age of ten she had to tend to. She cooked three meals a day, cleaned, did laundry, baby sat, nursed sick and injured kids, drove with kids to a town 20 miles away to shop for groceries and clothes, gardened, raised and butchered chickens, and took care of her elderly mother living on the farm. In her spare time, she chased cattle back into the pasture when they got out, and helped deliver calves when heifers were having trouble giving birth. Then during harvest, she spent every day, all day, driving the wheat truck from the harvest field to the grain storage elevator. In her retired years, she herself said she did not know how she managed all that.

One of the many things I learned from my mother's example is that people can do much more than they think they can. If it is important, necessary, and worth it to us, we usually will do what we have to do to make it happen. Much of this has to do with faith, and believing that God has not just thrown us into the world without a paddle, so to speak. Faith means believing that God has given us everything we need in order to do what we need to do. Without that faith and trust and love, I believe my mom would simply have given up.

During this pandemic, we may be asking ourselves if we have the wherewithal to deal with it, both individually and as a society/world. Some have denied that it is a real problem and that there is no need to address it in any meaningful way. Others are frightened almost to the point of paralysis and inaction. Most of us are probably somewhere between those two extremes. But most of us in some way are struggling with the question "Do we have the ability, wisdom, energy, desire, and compassion for each other to face this challenge?"

If we believe God has given us what we need to do what we need to do, then looking for indications of that might be helpful. One way to do that is with

hindsight. How was it we survived those challenging times in our lives when we thought we couldn't? If God gave us what we needed then, maybe God will do the same now and in the future.

Another way to glimpse God's gifts among us was described well by Mr. Rogers of the TV show "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood" when he said "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." People are putting their health on the line in order to serve others, like health care workers, grocery store clerks, emergency personnel, first responders, and many others. It is important to be aware of these examples of God's compassion and love happening in the midst of this crisis if we are not to lose faith.

Also important is to work to see possibilities for new life coming from this situation where it is easy to see only darkness, suffering, and death. After all, the paschal mystery is the core of our faith – that life comes from death. One possibility is that we will learn what to do (and what not to do) to better deal with contagious illnesses in the future. As countries we may decide it is in our best interest to put aside some differences in order to face common problems together. In our country we may finally realize that we are all intimately connected, and that the health of each of us depends on providing adequate healthcare for every individual. There is even the possibility that we might gain a greater appreciation for people like grocery store workers, and decide they are worth more than minimum wage.

Our peace of mind, as well as our mental and emotional health, depends on our belief in ourselves, which in turn depends on our belief that God created us good, that God created us "enough." Reminding ourselves of that will help keep us going rather than simply giving up.

Blessings, Fr. Garry