

As I struggle with all the losses that I hear from my clients during our virtual tele counseling sessions, I am reminded of how much pain there is in the world for families who have loved ones in nursing homes and can't visit with them the way they had been before the "stay at home" mandate became our "new normal."

Last week one client told me that her mother-in-law, age 95 who lives in a local nursing home, has tested positive for the corona virus and she and her husband can't visit her like they had before this all came about. Also her own mother who is 89 is also in a different nursing home in a different county, and doesn't understand why no one is coming to visit her. I can't imagine their fears, pain and frustrations. All I can do is to listen and offer my support and prayer.

In reflecting on these two elderly women, I thought of all that they have witnessed and endured in their life times: the great depression, two World Wars, the Korean War, the Viet Nam War, 9/11, the financial crisis of 2008 and many other personal losses of loved ones and past heart aches, to NOW be facing covid-19 in their later years without loved ones at their side!

Their present day experiences and their past struggles teach me to relook at my own life with so little to be upset over in comparison to their life long struggles. I am inconvenienced and can't be with family, friends and community members (who are all to date healthy), the way I use to. I can't see clients and directees face to face. I have to wear a mask and keep six feet between me and another person. These things are nothing in comparison to others, like these two women mentioned above. Yet their situation as well as my own, invite me to ponder on what is really important.

Can I treasure just a little more every person who calls or connects with me, asking for advice or help? Can I appreciate this time for more rest and prayer as gift to become a better person: a little more patient and less judgmental, a stronger believer in the goodness of every person, tap into the creativity given me by the God of Providence and use it for the sake of others?

Can I become a lover of all that I took for granted, and forgive past hurts done to me and by me? I pray that I will never want to go back to the "old normal" and allow myself and forget the lessons offered to me in this time of my life. I have so much more I want to do and become in the name of the God within.

Let us together count our blessings and losses as pure gift – that teach us to experience the presence of Christ Jesus in our daily "dying's and risings" to become "eucharist" (with a small "e") for one another each and every day. May our Provident God hold us ever so close!

You are in my daily thoughts and prayer. Thank you for "listening."

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