

KEEP CALM: KEEP TAKING THE MEDICINE OF THE PRESENT MOMENT AND TRUST IN GOD

Part Two

So what is the medicine of the present moment? This time is all very strange, and we all want to get back to the way things were, perhaps? But there are always blessings in times of trial. I think one of the things that God is giving us is an opportunity to deepen our relationship with God right where we are, personally, one to One. It should be a little easier for us to praise God in creation. We are geographically blessed here in many ways. Others are not so fortunate. We know God is everywhere, but that knowledge is in our heads but not always in our hearts, or bodies or souls. In fact, when we think of ourselves, we often lack confidence. We are more inclined to think of our faults and weaknesses and so end up discouraged and doubting God's love for us. But God wants us to enjoy God's being with us wherever we are. As Jesus said: Not on this mountain nor in Jerusalem rather what the Father wants is for people to worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:22ff).

Jesus invites us to go into our private room and shut the door and talk with God in that special place. This can just be within our own hearts and minds at any moment. So we need to just talk to God wherever we are. Giving thanks, praising God for the goodness and beauty in the world and in people and in ourselves! Asking God to help us and others in all the difficulties and fears and anxieties. Thanking God that he is quite happy to be with us sinners, just as Jesus ate and drank with ordinary people and enjoyed their company. Every grace we could possibly imagine is all there for us in Christ. Just believe you have received it and it will be yours, Jesus says (Mark 11:24). In this way those feelings of peace and presence that are more usually associated with being in a church building will also become stronger wherever we are. If Holy Communion has been teaching us anything it is that God wants to live in us and love through us. It is just sad that this wasn't emphasised enough in our Catholic upbringing, or maybe we weren't listening. Too much emphasis was placed on God outside us, God in special people but not so much in us ordinary people with ordinary lives and ordinary hopes and fears. St Teresa of Jesus (16th cent.) wrote that as we come to realise how much God loves us we will be able to endure the embarrassment of being with One so different from ourselves.

Having greater joy in God-with-us (Emmanuel), always and everywhere (sufferings not withstanding) **does not make the gathering of the community unnecessary or less important**, because church is about being together in Christ. What it does mean is that we have much more to "bring to the party" & to share with others. Our prayer, our listening to the word of God, our celebration of the Eucharist will be more meaningful and enjoyable because we will be bringing the whole of our lives to God with one another and we will be receiving God into the whole of our lives.

So God is inviting us to a re-configuration, a re-balancing of our spiritual lives so that we can have greater peace, greater confidence in God and a humble but real inner authority. We should be grateful for the service of others but not dependent upon them. (Call no one on earth your father ... Do not allow yourselves to be called Master or Teacher...Matt 23:9; Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. Matt. 18:20;) Good parents don't keep their children dependent and subservient they nurture them to maturity and responsible freedom. All the charisms of service in the Church are to be used to build up the Body of Christ "until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ (Eph 4:13). (DMA)