

## April 23, 2020 – “Coping With the Current Pandemic”

We recently received a memo dated April 8, 2020, entitled "Coping With the Current Pandemic" from Michael Hansen, Ph.D. who is the Director of Human Formation for the Diocese of Providence.

In his memo, Dr. Hansen speaks of the anxiety and stress we all feel as a result of the present crisis, along with feelings of helplessness and fear. He says that "although there are variables that are clearly outside of our immediate control, what we can control are our thoughts, decisions, actions, and how we take care of ourselves and others." I would like to share with you some of his suggestions and highlights from his article.

\*\* "Taking good care of ourselves and managing stress will help us to stay healthy and help us to cope better if we or our loved ones become ill. He suggests that we maintain a daily routine of meaningful activities.

\*\* Remain calm and rely only on reliable sources of information (accurate scientific and medical information, e.g. the Centers for Disease Control, CDC).

\*\* It is advised to take regular breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. Overexposure can further intensify feelings of anxiety.

\*\* Practice healthy self-care

- > take care of yourself physically
- > get adequate sleep
- > exercise regularly
- > moderate use of alcohol

\*\* Take time for involvement in activities that are both enjoyable and life-giving

- > listening to uplifting music
- > reading a good book
- > engaging in a preferred hobby
- > watching a good comedy

(laughing at a time like this is good for us)

\*\* Although we are practicing social distancing, staying connected with family and friends through phone calls, texting, FaceTime, Zoom, etc... is important.

> share your feelings and concerns, fears and anxieties with those you can confide in

\*\* Perhaps utilize a journal, writing about your experiences

\*\* If fears and anxieties are causing you distress, it may be advisable to consider seeking professional help for additional support"

Dr. Hansen concludes by saying that "This is a difficult time for all of us, but it is also an opportunity to take stock and to acknowledge what is most important in life. It is an especially opportune time to grow closer to God and to deepen our relationship with one another."

He then suggests ways to strengthen our relationship with the Lord:

- > make time for daily prayer
- > read scripture
- > pray the rosary

> virtual participation in the Mass

He says that "when we turn to our Lord, He reminds us of His incredible love for us, that He is with us at every moment of our lives, and to 'Be not afraid'".

The Bishop sent us the following prayer:

#### COVID-19: A PRAYER OF SOLIDARITY

For all who have contracted coronavirus,  
We pray for care and healing.

For those who are particularly vulnerable,  
We pray for safety and protection.

For all who experience fear or anxiety,  
We pray for peace of mind and spirit.

For affected families who are facing difficult decisions  
between food on the table or public safety,  
We pray for policies that recognize their plight.

For those who do not have adequate health insurance,  
We pray that no family will face financial burdens alone.

For those who are afraid to access care due to immigration  
status,  
We pray for recognition of the God-given dignity of all.

For our brothers and sisters around the world,  
We pray for shared solidarity.

For public officials and decision makers,  
We pray for wisdom and guidance.

Father, during this time may your Church be a sign of hope,  
comfort and love to all.

Grant peace.

Grant comfort.

Grant healing.

Be with us, Lord.

Amen.

God Bless!  
Father Joe