*Biblical Guidance for Times of Uncertainty*

“…Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned, nor will flames consume you” –Isaiah 43:1-2

“Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” –Philippians 4:6-7

“Be strong and steadfast; have no fear or dread of them, for it is the Lord, your God, who marches with you; He will never fail you or forsake you” –Deuteronomy 31:6

“Cast your care upon the Lord, who will give you support. He will never allow the righteous to stumble” –Psalm 55:23

“Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” –James 1:2-4

“So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil” –Matthew 6:31-34

*Practical Interventions and Resources*

1. Practice identifying which worry is “actual worry” and “hypothetical worry” to help yourself keep your worry in perspective. “Actual worry” is worry focused on present moment concerns related to events that have taken place; “hypothetical worry” is worry focused on what could happen or what we fear may happen, but not on what has happened.
2. Remember that the worry and concern you have is normal. Many of us are in the same boat and experiencing the same concerns you are. We’re all in this together and here to support one another.
3. Take a break from watching, reading, or listening to news stories and social media. Listening to and reading about the pandemic can cause us additional stress and concern about the present and the future. While it’s good to be informed about what is happening, spending too much time focused on it can cause increased levels of stress and worry. Take a break and focus on something else that is important to you.
4. Take care of your body: take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate (see Noah’s Ark Meditation below). Eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise, and get plenty of sleep. Keep yourself active and engaged with the world as best you can during this time.
5. Take care of your mind: Maintain a schedule that mirrors your pre-pandemic schedule to keep yourself in a comfortable routine: go to bed and wake up at the same time, get ready for the day, get dressed even if you’re staying home for the day or working from home. Many of us doing well with routine, and maintaining our normal routine can help us psychologically as we face the uncertainty associated with this pandemic.
6. Take care of your soul: Attend Holy Mass as often as possible. Many of the local parishes are streaming the Holy Mass online, allowing us to be present even when we cannot be there physically. EWTN, Relevant Radio, and other Catholic sources are also airing the Holy Mass virtually. Receive Spiritual Communion daily. Because we cannot receive Our Blessed Lord physically, the next best thing we can do is receive Him spiritually (see Spiritual Communion prayer below). There are many examples of the prayers associated with Spiritual Communion online—spend some time looking and most important, praying! Lastly, there are parishes throughout the world live streaming Eucharistic Adoration 24/7. What a gift! Spend some time in conversation with Our Lord, sharing with Him your cares and concerns.
7. Take time for self-care: Engage in activities you enjoy but do not often have time for because of your busy daily schedule. Take advantage of the extra free time you have during this pandemic to reengage in old hobbies and interests—or even try something new!
8. Connect with others: Call friends or family and see how they’re doing; share how you’re doing also. Call, video chat or text a friend or family member you haven’t been able to connect with lately because of your busy schedule. Use this as a time of connection, rather than disconnection.

Most importantly, make this a time of spiritual renewal for yourself and your family. Let this pandemic change you for the better. Learn more about your faith. Grow in faith, prayer, love of neighbor and trust in God.

*Noah’s Ark Meditation*

“Let’s begin by closing our eyes and taking a few deep breaths: breathing in for three seconds, holding the air in our lungs for three seconds, and breathing out for three seconds. Do this for the next thirty seconds, taking notice of any emotions popping up into our awareness.

Maybe they’re thoughts of uncertainty, anxiety or fear. Just let them be there, coming and going in their own good time. Continuing to breath in and out as before.

I want to bring to our awareness the story of Noah’s Ark. God was to send a great flood, one that would wipe out the peoples of the Earth. Having granted Noah foresight and divine guidance, he was able to craft a vessel we know today as Noah’s Ark.

Noah knew a storm was coming: he may not have known how hard the rain was going to fall and how much the waves would throw his boat around—but he did know that God was always with him and would protect him, his family, and the animals present on the ark. He trusted unwaveringly in God.

Noah’s Ark is a lot like us in our present time. In this scenario, the ark is us as we are: the person listening to this meditation. The rain and storms are our thoughts and emotions: the anxiety or fear we feel inside, or the uncertainty we’re experiencing in our lives due to the current pandemic.

While the storm will rage, and we feel like we’re going to be capsized and drown, we can take knowledge in the fact that God’s grace will always see us through any obstacle, no matter how impossible to conquer it appears to be in that moment.

Take heart in the knowledge that you’re the boat, an unsinkable object that is and will continue to be before, during, and after the storms and rains. Just as it was in the Bible, we, as the ark, will make it through the storms and safely settle on dry land.

We know that the weather will continue to change, and we’ll have wanted and unwanted thoughts and emotions throughout this time of uncertainty, but we also know we’re the ark, and we can make it through any storm with the grace of God. Take a moment to place your concerns and cares before God and ask for His grace in facing them.

I invite you now to return your focus to your breath, noticing your chest rising and falling with each inhale and exhale. And when you’re ready, open your eyes and come back to the room you’re in presently.”

*Spiritual Communion Prayer*

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.”