



In the midst of times of **uncertainty**, it's amazing how an attitude of **gratefulness** can help to **calm** us, **reduce fears** and **expectations**, open us to greater clarity and love. It is **not** a panacea. It may not cure or solve our **anxiety** or **concerns** but it can foster **ease, connection, kindness, and well-being** – all valuable qualities which would be good to “go viral” these days. Gratitude **cannot** save us from **sickness** or **suffering**, but it can change how we **experience** sickness, and it may change our relationship to suffering.

So, what might this mean with regard to how we **respond** to the immediate concerns of **COVID-19**? How might **gratefulness** impact what we do, how we do it, and who we are during this time? How might we seek out and treasure the unexpected **opportunities** of the

moment? In the midst of losses, how can we direct our attention toward the **gifts that remain in our lives** so as to build greater **capacity** to face what is **challenging**?

Here are some possibilities from the **Gratefulness Team**:

- ❖ **Reflect on Goodness** — Reflect with gratitude on all the ways that people are caring for one another around the globe: on the sacrifices of **health** and **service workers**, those who are **self-quarantining**, adjusting habits and lives; working overtime to do research, make tests and vaccines, and provide important, accurate and timely information. **Pray for them.**
- ❖ **Wash your Hands** — The 20 seconds recommended to “lather up” offer us an opportunity to **slow down** to experience gratitude for the **gift of hot and cold running water**, the miracle of **soap**, and the wonder of our **hands** themselves. (Now, when was the last time you thanked God for these gifts?) Consider making a sacred ritual of washing your hands, welcoming the opportunity to **meditate** on these **blessings**. (Easy to do as I wash my hands a lot but, after 4-5 times, I go back to saying Hail Marys!)
- ❖ **Stay Connected** — In this time of physical distancing, might this be an opportunity to connect by **phone, text** or **email** with family, friends, and neighbors to see how they're doing? And, what about reflecting with **gratitude** on the **relationships** in our lives and let people **know** we care about them? I think that's my **pandemic ministry**: weekly email letter and texting!
- ❖ **Be Generous** — Extend **compassion** to those whose lives are **impacted** most by this **crisis**. Try being more patient or kinder. Offer **smiles** and **gratitude** freely. **Give to organizations** whose operations and fundraising efforts are being impacted by the pandemic. **Support local businesses** struggling as many of us stay home.
- ❖ **See the Privileges of the Ordinary** — In the midst of a focus on how much is being lost, keep noticing all the **blessings that remain**. Allow yourself to **appreciate** and be in awe of what is **available** to you: **phones, electricity, showers, the beauty and resilience of nature, and all the parts of your body that still work!** (I greatly appreciate the last one!)
- ❖ **Commit to that which Sustains You** — Allow yourself to stay **grounded** in the things that preserve your **integrity** and reinforce the **beliefs** that help you have **faith** and **hope** in difficult times. Maintain or increase the **rituals, traditions, reminders, and practices** that help you to find **calm** in the midst of any storm. Read, write, or share poetry. Treat yourself, your family, your department or unit to **A Grateful Day**. (No complaints, negativity, or frowns!)