

WHILE AT HOME

March 23, 2020

The Inner Peace

First, remain calm and in control. In stressful times, panicking does more harm than good. When we are anxious and stressed, our emotions and memories may overpower our higher thinking and good judgment. We tend to overreact as a defensive measure, creating unbalances in our bodies. These reactions are grossly unhealthy, making us feel mentally and physically exhausted. Our minds spin, and we cannot make wise decisions or follow sound advice. Mindfulness is essential and can help you to feel better so you can handle any situation wisely.

Keeping a calm and joyful environment

Try these simple steps to make your home and personal space more peaceful. Invite your spouse and children to do them, too.

- **Reduce news intake:** Keeping the news on and checking the news on your phone won't help to make you feel better or remain calm. It's not helpful to watch TV or listen to the radio 24/7. Stay informed, then switch and watch a movie or something that will make you and your family enjoy time together.
- **Soften it up:** Play soft music to avoid spinning your thoughts. Identify your feelings and say it aloud and clear, like: "anxiety is here," "fear is present." Labeling and saying the feelings out loud helps calm the brain. Then focus on your body and your feelings, letting anxiety go with the sound of the music, giving yourself a sense of compassion, leading you to a sense of normalcy. If you have children, simply speak with them softly and urge them to express their feelings.
- **Ground in the body:** If you, your children or any family member are really panicking, use the 5-4-3-2-1 count. Describe in detail 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you smell, and the one taste in your mouth. This should help you to let go of the thoughts at that moment, and help you get back to normal.
- **Slow it down:** Take 3 to 6 long and slow deep breaths. Inhale through the nose and exhale longer out through the mouth. These will make you feel rested.
- **Be emphatic with yourself:** Tell your brain something like: "Brain, I know that you are trying to keep me safe, but those bad thoughts are not helpful now. I can't see the future, and you can't either. Be realistic, I am here now and today, and we are well!"
- **Consistent self-care:** Go for a walk or bike ride. Exercise to release any physical tension and feel each part of your body relaxing. Take a warm bath or a good shower. Try watching a comedy or something that makes you turn away from anxiety-driven behavior.
- **No self-destructive activities.** When we are emotionally stressed and unstable, we can react in a self-destructive way. Sometimes we overeat or starve ourselves; drink excessively; use drugs, painkillers or headache medications; gamble; or adapt with other addictive behaviors. Help your family members if they are exhibiting self-destructive behaviors.
- **Make time to pray:** This is a chance to renew our trust in God and teach our family to depend on Him to strengthen our faith with hope and the zeal of Christian charity. Offering prayers for others suffering because of the virus is a way to teach our kids how Christians trust in the only One that has the dominion of this situation: God. Take advantage of this opportunity to pray together and teach others how to pray!
- **Get support:** Talk to a mental health professional or someone close to you about your concerns, your fears. Perhaps get a hug from your spouse or your kids: that helps them and you. Concerned about physical contact? Just close your eyes and imagine that love and that hug.
- **Remember:** This too shall pass. The medical emergency will eventually change and we will come out of this stronger and empowered to overcome.



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
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Archdiocesan Prayer in the Time of the Coronavirus

Comfort us, O Lord, for we are like your disciples on the storm-tossed seas, unsettled by what lies ahead. We turn to You, our Healer and Guide, to still our hearts in our time of need and hear our prayer: Heal those who are sick with the coronavirus and protect the elderly and most vulnerable. Give strength to all who tend to our health and wisdom to researchers who work toward a cure. Open our eyes and hearts, as you did during Hurricane Harvey, that we may look beyond our immediate needs to care for others who need help. Through the Holy Spirit, guide our leaders to make wise decisions for the welfare of all the people they serve. Grant eternal rest to those who have died from the virus. May Mary, Our Mother, who has heard our pleas in the storms of our lives, intercede to her Son, that we may find healing and a prompt end to this illness. Mary, Star of the Sea, pray for us. Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior, heal us. Amen.

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