

## COVID Reflection #1

***"it is impossible to emerge from a crisis the same as before"***

~ Pope Francis

This past year was unexpected for all of us. The reality of the coronavirus has affected everyone in the world, and we all have our own 'story' of how we are surviving this crisis. As Pope Francis has said "it is impossible to emerge from a crisis the same as before". We can all relate to his words that, "Our way to emerge depends on the choices we make during the crisis".

I have to confess that, because of my work, my life has not changed that much. I spend my days reading, writing, communicating with members of the Congregation online or by mail, and praying. These things were not affected by the virus, only now I have much more time to do these things. For example, I have already written my Christmas message to the Congregation, and I am preparing my message to share at the closing of the second round of the Canonical Visitation of the Congregation. I have read more books in the last year than in the last two decades, including twice the three volumes of the history of the Community - over twelve hundred pages each time.

I am ashamed to say that financially I have no headaches like most of the world. Our financial support comes from the Provinces, and from the pastoral and educational salaries of two members of the Casa. So, I have not suffered the uncertainty and hardships that have affected ninety percent of the population.

One activity, as Superior General, that has suffered during this year is that I have not been able to travel to meetings, retreats and visits that I have had. At this time my plan was to be in Bolivia, after the Regional Chapter in São Paulo and the Canonical Visitation in Brazil. The year 2022 is going to be very busy trying to make the Canonical Visitation, participate in the Regional Chapter of the South American Region, and the three Provinces - Ontario-Kentucky in June, the United States in August, and Poland in November.

Despite times of frustration, uncertainty, and boredom, I have to confess that by spending time reading, reflecting and praying, I have survived well the quarantine and restricted life that is our reality. In relation to Pope Francis' quote, I believe that, by the grace of God, I am emerging better from the crisis. I have found myself more attentive to friends and Resurrectionists who live alone, calling them by phone (thanks to a good long distance calling plan). I am more aware of the virtues of patience, compassion, sensitivity, and solidarity. So many times I have thought about the question, "Do you know how to make God laugh?" The answer is, "Tell him your plans." This experience is either going to make us laugh or cry. Because of the choices I have made - made with faith, hope, and love - I am well I am not crying, and I am trying to share these theological tips with others - like today with you.

In a letter Pope Francis has spoken, in reference to the pandemic, about the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37). The Good Samaritan awakens in us a spirit that many of us have learned to value much more - compassion, solidarity, and sensitivity. The Good Samaritan shows us these virtues, and directed at the least indicated person, a person - because of his culture and history - was an enemy. The courage of the Good Samaritan reminds us of the call of the Lord Jesus to not only think of 'neighbor' as an intellectual concept, but in a concrete reality. During this time of shared suffering Jesus asks us, "Who is your neighbor?" We know well not only the difficulties of our family members, the people with whom we live, but of so many family members, friends, colleagues and acquaintances who are also suffering, who are also going through times of fear, frustration, uncertainty, and boredom. Although we cannot visit them, because of restrictions in our countries - for the common good of all - but we have other means of accompanying them and assuring them that they are not alone, forgotten or abandoned. Thank God we are not limited to mail or telephone, but for those who have the internet we can maintain face to face communication, and free of charge. Under these circumstances it is perhaps the best we can give and receive.

I believe I am emerging better from this crisis, thanks to God. Especially because of the spiritual reading, it has enhanced my prayer and my charity. My hope is that we all - to some extent - can say and believe the same thing, that we are better people, more united families, and better followers of Jesus Christ.

~ Fr. Paul Voisin, CR

(Superior General, Congregation of the Resurrection)