



Staying Connected in this Uncertain Time

As we carry on here at St. Joseph Spiritual Ministries in remote locations, we are taking some contemplative time to reflect on a favorite Scripture passage that has held meaning for us in past difficulties and what it may be saying or inviting us to look at in new ways during this global crisis.

THE DOORS WERE LOCKED – FOR FEAR -- By Rosemary Mulvihill, CSJ



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May you be the giver of peace.

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were locked in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Temple authorities. Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

Having said this, the savior showed them the marks of the crucifixion. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw Jesus, who said to them again, "Peace be with you. As Abba God sent me, so I'm sending you." John 20:19-26

These words speak to my heart during these days as I think of the frightened apostles locking themselves inside – much like us at this time! Fear casts such a large shadow over our world right now, fear of this destructive enemy, this virus, which has invaded nations, taken

lives and leaves a wide trail of grief and loss. Fear which is so widespread and has so many ramifications that we can feel anxious, alone and without any control. The media elevates our fears and tightens the grip on our hearts, as do the statistics we regularly see updated on the nightly news. Fear, such a common emotion, mentioned in the bible three hundred and thirty-six (336) times and perhaps, seeking to invade our hearts about the same number of times!

So, how do we unlock the doors and hear the voice of our God speaking quietly to us? "Peace be with you." Where can we find this peace, this re-assuring God? Perhaps we commune with nature, listen to music, read some poetry or do whatever reminds us that, as the poet Kevin Anderson writes, "Now is Where God Lives."

"Peace be with you, as Abba God sent me, so I am sending you." How can I be a peacemaker today? How can I bring peace to those who are fearful? In her book of blessings, Jan Richardson suggests to each of us to "wait with your hands open to receive what could never come except to what is empty and hollow...wait for it. Still yourself. Stay."

May God's peace, the assurance of God's loving presence, fill your heart today.

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May you receive peace.

An Additional Resource!

There is a new song by Michael Joncas – Shelter Me – inspired by scripture and the pandemic.

<https://youtu.be/ToHtIDdY-fM>

COMPOSER'S NOTE: These are difficult time for all of us, individually and globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted life as normal and called for acts of corporate and individual heroism in the face of present suffering and an uncertain future. People of faith may be struggling to articulate their belief in an all-good and all-powerful God in this new era. "Shelter Me" -- is my attempt as a church composer to find God's presence even in these fraught times. Based on Psalm 23, my paraphrase adapts the psalmist's sentiments to respond to our present anxieties.

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