

*“The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.”*

This past week has been filled with so many things. I have read many medical research materials from health professionals, watched some chilling documentaries from Italian hospitals, listened to series of press briefings, read lots of statements from the bishops, celebrated Masses solo and watched many of my brother priests celebrate Masses without a congregation. I find myself wondering: what is possibly next?

No one would have ever imagined that we will live in a world where we cannot gather together to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. Who would have thought we would experience a halted economy or a global travel restriction? No one would have thought items would be rationed at grocery stores. Needless to say, many are scared for what the future brings. Parents are overwhelmed trying to navigate family life. Some are worried about their jobs and how the bills will get paid. We may be tempted to see doom, pain, fear, despair, confusion and questions.

In the midst of all these, the words of Psalm 23 bring us comfort – *The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want*. Things may get ugly and sad in our lives or in our world, but the Shepherd is ever near. In the midst of uncertainties, we shall not lack God’s love. We shall not lack God’s peace and direction. We may walk in the dark valley of fear but God is with us to give courage. The book of 1 Samuel 16:7 reminds us that *“Not as man sees does God see.”* In God there is light and hope. In God, there is life and victory, there is redemption and love. In God we find our security and peace. In God, we find answers and solutions. So, we can cast our anxieties upon him trusting God will not abandon us.

We remember our healthcare workers, first responders and military personnel. We pray for countries, cities and families who are already suffering the terrible scourge of the coronavirus. May the practice of social distancing not make us detached from one another. Offer some prayers for the self and our world. Make a phone call or send a text message and check on others. May our hunger for God grow ever stronger at this time of crisis.

We know for sure that in every age, God has been our refuge. In every age, including the age of coronavirus, that same God is our hope.