

Praying through 2020

Have you ever covered your eyes with your hands, even as you peek through them at the movie screen? Your television or laptop? This action, seemingly lessens your fright, yet still allows you to face what is being shown. Even if what we see shows that the news is not good. Covid-19 continues to ravage so many nations, each made up of individuals. Each number is not just a statistic, but a child of God. Surely, their lives are so much more valuable than the place they take in graphs divided by age, gender, race.

God knows each of their stories. He sees behind all the masks we wear. The ones we put on to protect others during the pandemic, and the ones that try to hide our fears, worries and anxieties. All we are is seen by the One who inspired David to write in the first five verses of his 139th psalm:

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue, you, LORD, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Sensing His hand of blessing upon us changes everything. He remains with us as we face the frightening, concerning news of so many crises. Since we know we can't escape the reality of life at this time, or make it go away by hiding, let us do what we can - turning to Him in prayer, keeping up the conversation with Him in everyday actions. Yes, even as we put on our masks.

I share the World Council of Churches published prayer written by Rev. Dr. Richard Bott. I thank God for inspiring him to write so beautifully, as his words transform the very tangible action of putting on our masks into a sacred conversation with our Triune Lord.

A prayer as I put on my mask:

*Creator God,
As I prepare to go into the
world,
help me to see the
sacrament
in the wearing of this cloth
let it be "an outward sign
of an inward grace" –
a tangible and visible way
of living
love for my neighbours,
as I love myself.*

*Christ, the Son,
since my lips will be
covered,
uncover my heart,
That people would see my
smile
in the crinkles around my
eyes.
Since my voice may be
muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words,
but with my actions.*

*Holy Spirit,
As the elastic touches my
ears,
remind me to listen carefully-
and full of care –
to all those I meet.
May this simple piece of cloth
be
shield and banner,
and each breath that it holds,
be filled with your love.
In your Triune Name and
in that love,
I pray.
May it be so.
May it be so.*

May the prayer bless you and strengthen your faith, as Christ's peace grants you courage to peek through your hands with less fear, sensing God's abiding love and care. Truly, may it be so.