**Courage Ministry**

**Article 115 April - June 2020**

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**Being spiritually aware and forearmed during Covid-19 Lockdown**

**Introduction**

Fortunately, when my wife and I recited the Breviary on Monday 22nd June for evening prayer I got an inspiration. I was quite confident then that I should offer some scriptures that are life-giving for me and three particular prayers that have touched me (us.)

In the verses I note for you I will share personally what touches me deeply so that the Holy Spirit might console and inspire you as you ponder and pray with the particular verse. I hope they are a blessing for you during the Lockdown.

**Psalm 42:7 Deep is calling to deep.**  I have found this word encouraging because I interpret it as the Heart of God calling to my heart. And it is the episcopal motto and insignia of one of my favourite saints - Saint John Henry Cardinal Newman - *Heart speaks to heart (Cor ad Cor Loquitur).*

**Psalm 139 I am known to the Lord**

**Verses: 1-3:** *O Lord you search me and know me, you know my resting and rising, you discern my purpose from afar. You mark when I walk or lie down, all my ways lie open to you.*

***Verse 4:*** *Before ever a word is on my tongue you know it, O Lord, through and through****.***

 ***Verse 7:*** *O where can I go from your spirit, or where can I flee from your face?*

*Verse 13-14, For it was you who created my being, knit me together in my mother’s womb.* ***I thank you for the wonder of my being.***

WheneverI pray this psalm I find verse 14 so liberating and magnificent. My own self is a wonder. I believe this and it confirms my being born in the image and likeness of God and certainly helps my self-esteem. I hope it blesses you in your own convictions about yourself. This verse can be used as a prayerful inspiration during the day when you are engaged in routine matters.

 **Psalm 36(37):3,4 & 5 Trust in the God who acts for us**

*If you trust in the Lord and do good, then you will live in the land and be secure. If you find your delight in the Lord, he will grant your heart’s desire. Commit your life to the Lord, trust in him and he will act.*

During the Covid-19 Lockdown I have been reflecting on my fears and anxieties. And this psalm has been a strong reminder of what I ought be. The daily Mass scriptures frequently records those who trusted in the Lord and were healed. So often Jesus acts quickly for those who declare trusting belief in Him. I have recently been able to pray with slightly more trust. I have not got there fully yet – but am believing in the fruitfulness of my appeals to the Lord. Every psalm is a challenge, yet a blessing if we pray the psalms in trust.

**Psalm 129 The Lord does hear our voice**

**Verse 1** *Out of the depths I cry to you , O Lord.*

**Verse** 2 *Lord hear my voice ! O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.*

I picture in my imagination when I recite this psalm, daily at the moment, that the Lord is truly opening Himself to my voice and does actually hear me.

**Verse 5***. My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.*

While I count on the Word of God the response may not be what I expected: but as Cardinal Newman writes it is usually an answer that is good for me.

**Jeremiah 6:16 The fundamental pathway for each one of us**

*Consider which path it was that stood you in good stead long ago, That path*

*follow and you shall find rest for your souls.*

Whenever I consider my life and its pathways I find this verse is so right for me. It may be helpful for you too. Each one of us has a varying pathway so what applies to one does not apply to another. The Word of God is free and loving.

**Ecclesiasticus 4:28** **Speak courageously**

*Do not refrain from speech at an opportune (crucial) time, and do not hide your wisdom.*

In our opening prayer at Mass we ask God to forgive our sins of omission. The People of God need to courageously speak, not hiding behind the virus of fear.

**Isaiah 55:11 God’s Word is fulfilling**

*…the word that goes forth from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.*

I remember Dr Ralph Martin proclaiming this word early on in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and it has stayed with me ever since. The Word is actually true and does do what it is meant to. This is yet another verse that confirms my utter belief in the magnificent Word of God sent for us.

**John** **1:14** **The Incarnation**

*The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only son of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Jesus is the one for us, who has lived among us through his humanity and is by the Holy Spirit the son of Mary, as well as the Son of God. No wonder the early Church wrote so movingly about what we call the Incarnation. This has been a long term favourite scripture for me because of its recognition of humanity.

**Matthew 7:12** **A command**

*So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the of the Law and the Prophets.*

One way I think we can do this is to think of ourselves as bringing the presence of Jesus to whom we meet. We know that we are imperfect but this Jesus attitude helps us step up. A difficult challenge but the Word of God we know is active and alive and can judge the secret emotions and thoughts. If we have this disposition toward whom we meet we will be better at living this command of Jesus.

**Acts 12:5 God’s wonderful answer and response**

*All the time Peter was under guard the Church prayed to God for him unremittingly.* The scripture for the feast of Saints Peter and Paul June 29th

I really do appreciate this word “unremittingly.” I have seen how the incessant prayer of the Sydney Catholic Charismatic Renewal for two or more years was a significant factor in the rehabilitation of a man with a severe psychotic illness.

**Prayer**

This is the concluding prayer for Psalter Week 4 Monday: My wife’s favourite:

*Stay with us, Lord Jesus, as evening falls: Be our companion on our way. In your mercy inflame our hearts and raise our hope, so that in union with our brethren, we may recognize you in the scriptures, and in the breaking of Bread. Who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.*

**The Prayer of Saint John Paul II**

A prayer Pope John Paul II prayed daily was taught to him by his father.

*Holy Spirit I ask you for the gift of wisdom for a better understanding of you and your divine perfections; for the gift of reason for a better understanding of the spirit of the mysteries of holy faith; for the gift of knowledge so that I can follow the principles of faith in my life; for the gift of counsel so that I will seek counsel with you in all matters and always find it with you; for the gift of piety so that I will always serve your majesty with filial love; for the gift of the fear of God, so that I will fear the sin which offends you, Oh Lord. Amen.*

**A Meditation of Saint John Henry Cardinal Newman**

*God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another… I have my mission ... I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for aught. I shall do good. I shall do his work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it - if I do but keep His commandments.*

*Therefore I will trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am. I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me - still He knows what He is about.*

This meditation helps me to surrender my day to the Lord.

BrisbaneCourage is a Ministry of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane