Dear friends:

As I looked back over yesterday's GNIM, I realised that I had succumbed to confusion over which day of the week it was and labelled it Wednesday. You may be relieved to know that I have now figured out that it is Friday and have made the appropriate change to the archived copy: my apologies!

So many of people have commented to me about losing track of the days (their experience as well as mine) and it has made me realise how much we rely on the normal rhythm of many things to mark the passage of time. Whether it is the days of the week, the months of the year, the seasons, the festivals or celebrations, we tend to have our personal feelings about each and a certain comfort in knowing what comes next. There are rituals we are used to following and these become comfortable over time, whether it is Sunday brunch after Mass, grocery shopping on Thursday evenings, doing housecleaning and laundry on Saturdays or the expectation that the family will gather at Grandma and Grandpa's house on Sunday afternoons. When I was a child there were certain days I could immediately recognise by what was being served for dinner on that day; if the menu changed there would be a very good reason.

Perhaps what makes this time more difficult for many of us is the uncertainty of what to expect: the days, months, seasons and celebrations are continuing to happen but not in the way to which we are accustomed, and we have no idea when or how this state of affairs is going to end. All the announcements and possibilities are conditional and we don't yet see the end in sight.

I'd like to share with you a personal favourite prayer which is a reflection by Thomas Merton:

“My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.”
Perhaps one of the reasons why so many of us are checking out various Mass offerings on the internet is our desire to find one which feels like “home”. Although we know that as members of the “universal Church” we shall find Mass being celebrated according to the same rubric anywhere in the world we go, we do notice the subtle differences in the setting of the parts of the Mass, the choices of hymns and hymnbooks, perhaps even the accents or languages we hear in the liturgy which don’t stop us from feeling welcome but do highlight that we aren’t in our usual place. We can enjoy this up to a point but sometimes we just want to be at home.

If you are missing your parish, it may help to find out if a nearby parish is streaming their Masses; it may not be quite home but may feel closer. The HamiltonDiocese.com site does have a listing of all the parishes which stream their Masses on a parish web site, on FaceBook, YouTube, etc. Mass from the Cathedral with Bishop Crosby is broadcast on Cable 14 at 11 on Sunday mornings and at 1 PM on CHCH tv.

If you can, gather remotely with family or fellow parishioners using one of the many social media programs to proclaim the readings and sing a couple of the familiar hymns which are used in your parish. You can find the daily readings, prayers, recordings of the responsorial psalm for each Sunday and some other resources at: https://www.livingwithchrist.ca/ This has the benefit of being a Canadian resource, although there are many good resources from other countries available to us on the internet. This prayer is from that site:

**PRAYER DURING PANDEMIC**

_They cried to the Lord in their trouble,_  
_And he saved them from their distress;_  
*_He sent out his word and healed them,*_  
_And delivered them from destruction._  
*Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,*  
*For his wonderful works to humankind._  
Psalm 107:19-21

Lord God,  
I pray for all who have become sick or died by the coronavirus that has been spreading throughout the world.  
In your mercy and compassion, deliver us from this disease,  
In your holy wisdom, guide all who are working to contain the outbreak,  
In your steadfast love, bring healing to all your children who have fallen sick,  
Welcome into your arms the ones that died,  
Comfort the ones they left behind.

In faith, I place my trust in you.  
In hope, I turn to you in my time of need.  
In love, I give glory to your name.  
In gratitude, I will praise you with my life.

In your Son’s name I pray. Amen.

*Wishing you every blessing for this Third Sunday of Easter,*  

_Gillian_