Dear friends:

We have been talking a lot lately about learning lessons from the Contemplatives about surviving isolation and there have been lots of suggestions about meditative prayer. Today, when I met with the chaplains for our weekly on–line meeting, we were discussing a prayer exercise I had shared on rediscovering Sabbath.

One of the chaplains raised a point which was quickly echoed by others that the idea that we have lots of free time on our hands now may not apply to everyone, and that that is a pretty privileged position. They reminded us of the demands made on working parents who are trying to balance the roles of employee, parent and teacher, and who possibly have far less time than ever before – and a lot more stress. Many teachers are struggling with the new demands of teaching in a format for which they have never been trained, and juggling parenting and supporting their own children’s education whilst trying to serve the needs of their on–line classrooms.

Two things come to mind, one of which recalls my feelings when Sunday shopping took over: on 24 April 1985 the Supreme Court of Canada in the BIG M DRUG MART case struck down the Lord’s Day Act on the grounds that it contravened the freedom of religion and conscience provision in the CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS. A few years later I read a reflection which spoke of how important it was for the Children of Israel to be able to honour the Sabbath Day: before they won this privilege in the Exodus, they were slaves; after, they considered themselves free people. The article went on to say that we had chosen to return to slavery by not allowing ourselves a day of rest.

The other is a storybook, much enjoyed by my children, which is probably no longer acceptable for all sorts of politically correct reasons; notwithstanding, I am sharing it with you in the hope that you can take five minutes to listen – and maybe chuckle....

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kg1EcW_Pf98 As a mother of four children eight and under at that time, I could really relate! And my kids thought it was hilarious!

The point of all this is that it may be far too ambitious to try to find a day – or even an hour – of Sabbath; we may be better off to try for five minutes! A few of these “moments” of Sabbath spread throughout our day may help us to be able to face the demands.
Perhaps we can find time to listen to a piece of reflective music: like this one—
https://www.google.com/search?q=youtube+just+to+be+i+is+a+blessing+song&rlz=1C1GCEB_enCA898CA898&
oq=Youtube+Just+to+be+i+is+a+blessing&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j33i3.13842j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8, to say a decade of the Rosary or to recite the Jesus Prayer, ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.")
, or to use the Christian Meditation resource on the Learn at Home page for a two-minute or five-minute meditation. If our children are not already used to Christian Meditation from school, this may be a great time to share this prayer format with them. Here's another short meditation based on a prayer written by Cardinal John Henry Newman used by Mother Teresa and her Sisters: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvhDGOXDxCY

The Acts of Faith, Hope and Love are prayers which were once part of every Catholic’s personal treasury but are not as well known today. Here are some more contemporary versions of these prayers which you may enjoy and find peaceful as you fall into the rhythm of this Litany:

**Litany of Faith, Hope, and Love**

Lord God, please give me the grace of the virtues of faith, hope, and love that you promised at baptism and that only you can give.

**Act of faith.** My God, I believe in you, and all that your Church teaches, because you have said it, and your word is true.

Lord, I believe in you ...

... Because the beauty of the world speaks of you.
... Because the goodness in the world comes from you.
... Because I can discern and know the truth.
... Because the laws of the universe are ordered.
... Because your creation is sustained in being.
... Because I am a mystery to myself that your words illuminate.
... Because you are the foundation of truth.
... Because you are too great for me to fully understand.
... Because trustworthy people have believed in you for centuries.
... Because of the witness of science.
... Because of the witness of the saints.
... Because of the witness of the Gospels.
... Because you have given me the gift of faith.
... Increase my faith.

**Act of hope.** My God, I hope in you, for grace and for glory, because of your mercy, your promises and your power.

Lord, I hope in you ...

... Because everything else decays.
... Because you always keep your promises.
... Because you are the King of the Universe.
... Because you created me for your purpose.
... Because I have seen your hand in my own life.
... Because your words direct me.
... Because your goodness is the ground I walk on.
... Because you are greater than anything that threatens me.
... Because in history, good has triumphed.
... Because you have sustained your Church despite the weakness of men.
... Because you have provided for me all my life.
... Because you are all powerful.
... Because without you, I would not exist.
... Because of the witness of the saints.
... That I may I be happy with you forever.
... Increase my hope.

Act of love. O my God, because You are so good, I love You above all things and for your sake I love my neighbor as myself.

Lord, I love you ... 
... Because you loved me first.
... Because you are infinite goodness.
... Because you are inexhaustible beauty.
... Because you are unfathomable truth.
... Because you made love the fundamental law.
... Because I wouldn't exist without love.
... Because you created me.
... Because you gave me every good thing.
... Because you gave me my faith.
... Because you have protected me.
... Because you have tested me.
... Because you have trusted me with your life in my soul.
... Because you have surrounded me with love.
... Because you died for me.
... Give me deeds of love and not just words.
... Increase my love.

Let us pray

Lord God, give me the faith I need to know your will, the hope I need to accept your will, and the love I need to do your will, even when I don’t understand it, knowing that your way is better. I ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen. (Tom Hoopes in Aleteia, Apr 27, 2020)

Until tomorrow,

Gillian