

## Citizens of Heaven

"I understood only the great benefit of loving God more, that is, cooperating with His love. Now as I then felt the separation from certain things of the world" (*Blessed Maria Teresa Scivilli*)

When we turn on the television, we watch news about the worse conditions in the world.

Covid 19 cases are arising in the world. Apart from that war, flood, landslide, earthquakes, change of weather, etc. are affected the humanity in a great deal. This moment is unlike anything that most of us have ever experienced. The tally of sick and deceased mounts higher every day. We are cut off from one another, passing our days in varying degrees of isolation, worries about our health; finances and the future we have planned dominate our thoughts.

Our lives are not totally within our control. We cannot do anything at all. It seems people are relying more on their faith and spirituality during this pandemic than ever before when things happen that beyond our comprehension or beyond our control. We search for the deeper meanings of life.

We need to move beyond our limitations. During this time is placing us more firmly on our journeys of faith and spirituality. Very few of us have ever experienced a situation to find God in all things. Their voices echo in our Christian tradition, offering us wisdom that can help us to find God amidst the current crisis. Here, I remember our dear, beloved Mother foundress's prayer, "I love you in my nothingness, because there, too, I discover your infinite wisdom." So much fear arises from our reactive thinking. We obsess over the terrible things that could happen. What if I or my loved ones get sick?

Imagining the good that might come out of our current situation comes less easily to us. Yet when we look back through the history of God's dealing with

humanity, we see that God has brought good forth from evil, time and again. We need not be afraid because God does not desire our sufferings but rather is constantly working to turn our sufferings to joy. Above all, this worldwide pandemic is inviting us to an expanded the idea of community as we realize the whole world is in this together. We are experiencing the pain and sorrow of the global community. Now we can open ourselves to the joys and responsibilities of creating and recreating the kind of global community. Like never before, this is calling us to a great degree of soul searching and a depth of unselfishness. Contemplation and actions are complementary in the Carmelite life and for Maria Teresa Scilli. It is "to leave God for God."

There are so many resources on time to participate in communal events, to meditate and reflect on the Word of God. This is a great time to explore to practice in our daily life and participate in the paschal mystery of Christ.

Covid 19 has disrupted the world and forced billions of people worldwide to step outside of their normal routines. For many, this means that life has slowed down considerable. So many of us experienced this slow down as something uncomfortable. Our lifestyles indicate how far we have strayed from God's vision for our lives. All things are happening beyond our strength and power. So rather than lamenting the current disruption and affront against our presumed Omnipotence. We might welcome the opportunity to rest and to live more humanly as long as this crisis persists and perhaps even beyond. Maria Teresa Scilli reminds us that hope finds a place in our lives when we can go beyond ourselves and trust that there is our God—a God who is reliable and always working for our good.

We, Christians, are in the place of as "Citizens of Heaven" (Phil 3:20).

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