



## SEVEN WAYS TO DEAL WITH CORONAVIRUS ANXIETY!

So, thus far It's been a bit of a rough patch. Even if we set aside the insani-ty that is our 2020 political nightmare, the day-to-day challenges of job/fam-ily/dating/bills/fun/laundry/war and terrorism, etc., there's that... other thing.

Yes! Coronavirus that so many already definitely know too much about.Scared? Skin rough from all the handwashing? Keeping up with social dis-tancing? Having trouble focusing on everything else when everything else keeps getting canceled? So many of us are thinking along the same lines.

We don't know how this is going to end. We don't know who will "get it,"how many will die, and how much our lives will change in response. Do you become anxious, especially about health. In fact — What if *I* have the virus? What if our parents — in good health contract it? What about our grandparents? What about everyone else? My neighbors? With a global moment such as this anxiety is unreasonable. But it can be taken to ex-cess. So here, for all of us, are **seven ways to remember to breathe in a world that is shaking.**

### 1. Keep something normal

What's a simple daily routine you care about? Keep that up (making your good cup of coffee, go for your daily walk, watch that favorite TV program, exercise, etc), even if everything else feels off. Good times and bad, somethings should stay the same.

## 2. (Re)connect

We haven't had a pandemic in the United States since the internet changed everything. On the one hand, it means when something bad happens, we know immediately. On the other hand, it means we can be in touch with people easily even when stuck at home.

Refresh relationships that have gone stale. Talk to your closest connections, of course. But also, take a risk. **A safe one. Text someone you haven't communicated with recently and have a FaceTime date.** Or telephone them!

**AND THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT: Just don't use your spare time to google "corona virus symptoms" for the 27th time.**

## 3. Gather virtually - to pray!

We need group connection, too. Virtual prayer is a different sort of experience, but it truly can be meaningful. If you're able, via the Internet, set up a time to pray the rosary with 2 or more other people. Pray the Joyful Mysteries thanking God for what you have been given thus far in life.

## 4. Put down your screens

Yes. You just were told above to FaceTime everyone and pray via internet with a group of people, but it's all about balance. Especially for those who live alone, much of life now is tied to computers, tablets, and phones. But, especially with cancelled events leading to more time at home, it's important to put the screens down.

And what should you be doing instead? You know what your hobbies are, or would be if you had time for them. That time you're not spending commuting? Use it for that. Write an actual letter, mail it (thru a drive up mail box), practice your guitar, piano, listen to some soothing music, etc.

## 5. Remember everything else awesome and awful is going on

Gratitude is great. We know this. So, yes, remember good things happening in the midst of the crazy. If you're lucky enough to be financially stable and not an hourly worker, or someone in the gig economy, hold that blessing tight. It's an act of resistance to find joy when the world is in a state of disarray.

The flipside might seem dark. Because COVID-19 is not an isolated incident. This virus is a reminder of the interconnectedness of our world. It's a sacred act to donate to organizations helping those in need, to continue to engage in advocacy, and to remember — every day — just how many people go without good healthcare. Angry? Good. We should be. After things return to whatever the **NEW NORMAL** is we need to act on behalf of the most vulnerable in our society.

## 6. Think about the story you'll tell.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses started to review his own story and his people's story, telling it again, a little differently than when it was happening in real time. How can you tell the story of this moment? Whether you journal, create art, or just talk about your experiences with a friend, your story, a **holy experience** is worth telling. That includes your feelings, your anxiety, your anger, your grief, and your uncertainty about how this will all end.

Someone is going to ask you what this time was like. Keep track day by day how you are doing.

## 7. FINALLY .....B-R-E-A-T-H-E

Stop reading, yes, stop reading, for 10 seconds. Shut your eyes. Notice where your feet are. Plant them. Place your hands on your lap. Take a breath. Slow. Slower. Take another. Roll your shoulders a little and

loosen your neck. Did you yawn? Good. It's working. Do this every hour. Set a re-minder on your phone. Set a timer (on your phone or click on the night-stand) for 10 minutes. This is what the adult meditation group does. Repeat quietly to yourself this word: **MA RA NA THA**. This is Aramaic, the lan-guage of Jesus, that means "Come, Lord!" You need not think about any-thing or say anything. Just quietly breathe this word in and out.

Remember: We're all figuring this out as we go. So be patient, with yourself, with the government and — please — with your parish priest and office staff. This pandemic is new. This is not easy. But none of us are alone! Talk to someone. Now go wash your hands. Don't touch your face. Breathe deeply. You got this.

**ALL WILL BE WELL!!**