SOCIAL MEDIA & SOCIAL DISTANCING

Every person is dealing with stresses around the coronavirus and trying to make challenging decisions. Think about (and pray for) the millions of people, far more vulnerable than us, making choices. People in China, Spain, Italy. Perhaps they were not getting (and still not getting) to make choices at all. Some of us are not able to freely choose either.

When life goes into chaos, one of the most important decisions we can make is **how we treat each other.** Do we give dirty looks to the person at the grocery store who sneezes or coughs? Do we admonish someone we love for hugging a friend without thinking about the virus? Do we try to calm our anxiety by judging the way others are handling their own anxiety – or their lack of anxiety?

"Social distancing" will definitely be part of our lexicon here on out! Physical distancing is necessary to avoid spreading the germs. By "social distancing," experts mean not getting too physically close to one another, especially in crowded places. **But what we desperately need is social connecting. We need to take care of each other**. What have you in the past posted online? Does is cause "social distancing" even though you may not be physically present?

Perhaps, during this difficult time, we can take this time to reflect on how we have used or are using social media. Is what we post show a deep care for ourselves and each other. Or does it cause social distancing? What about those from whom we have socially disconnected!

I think all of us want to use and harness the power of social media to lift one another up. Are we teaching our children the same? When you think about what you've posted (oh, and by the way, do you ever see what your teens/children post?) in the last few days, weeks or months,

is the content helping you and others? Is it inspirational? Empowering? Positive? Kind? Does it reflect your Catholic Faith? Or is what you've posted denigrating, angry, shaming and judgmental?

We are only equipped to cope with NOW. Look around you right now. You okay at this moment? Great! Take a few deep breaths. Rinse, lather, repeat and don't re-freak yourself out with the headlines. The world needs connection, empathy, and calm. And so do each of us.

It's possible we have gotten caught in the sticky web of fear, and been posting scary headlines or unleashing anxiety with angry and/or judgmental posts. If that's true, we are far from alone. But we can also correct it. Take some deep breaths and really consider what media content we are putting into the world. Let's post with, and if talking on the telephone, open hearts and clear intentions.

Let's get back to social connecting. For all we can't control right now, this is something we can absolutely can.