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Companions on the Journey

May 17, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ

This morning I was reading a story about the corona virus that has changed all of our lives. Apparently it is still stumping some of the best medical minds in the world. It is different from other viruses. For some people it attacks the lungs. For others it attacks the heart. For still others it affects the blood and produces blood clots which break loose and travel in the body often with drastic results. For others it negatively impacts the kidneys. In still others it serves to unleash a wild and all-in response from the person's immune system which itself can cause death.

In others there are no symptoms at all. At least none that we know how to register. In others there is the mildest form of discomfort. For some there is fatigue. For others, the loss of the sense of taste and/or the sense of smell. What is intriguing is that a person can be infected with this virus, not know it, and yet be a carrier in such a way that others can catch the virus. They in turn may not have such a benign reaction as the person in whom the virus is living.

I am a great believer in the value and importance of science. But I am also enough of a student of life on this planet to know that even the best scientists are sometimes stumped by the very data they seek to master and analyze. As a country and as a world we have been speeding along at an amazing pace. It is as if we have slammed on the breaks and everything has come to a standstill. We cannot stay at this juncture for very long. One of the slowly emerging realizations is that we have been perhaps taking a good deal of our life on earth for granted. We have been thinking that everything will simply continue being as it has been. But that is not so. There is no such guarantee. We must not be foolish in our thinking.

And as we realize some of these things we do not like it at all. It is so disruptive of our lives but also our livelihood, our hopes and dreams, our routines, our achievements. Everything. And somebody has to be to blame for this. We seek to place blame as if by doing so we can identify the culprit (or culprits) and then rest assured that the blame is not ours. But I am not so sure. We sometimes like to venture into very unknown territories. We have an insatiable curiosity at times and believe we are entitled to know. As if there is no path that we cannot go down. But there are consequences. Severe consequences.

We will probably never know the exact origin of Corona-virus 19 whether a virology lab in Wuhan or a street market in China where live exotic animals are for sale. But there is an arrogance to us sometimes as human beings and a distinct lack of humility. It comes from having eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. We think we know. But we do not know. We think we can handle but we cannot handle. My friends, Our Lord bids us stop. And take a good, long look. And after looking and assessing, to make some necessary adjustments in the way we have been living and conducting our lives. The first commandment from 3200 years ago is this: "I am the Lord thy God thou shalt not have strange gods before me." We have lusted after our various strange gods and until we rid ourselves of them we will be at risk, greater even than this risk which, I believe, is very far from being over. And so, we pray.

Peace,
Monsignor McHenry