

IN LOVE THERE IS NO ROOM FOR FEAR
1Jn 4, 18

The worldwide health emergency that we are facing is for all of us who are nourished by Manquehue spirituality an opportunity. Alongside the understanding and respect for the directions that the national authorities have given us there comes another unique invitation: let us return, once again, to God, who is Eternal Love and Eternal Life.

When Adam and Eve failed to acknowledge that what they were and what they had was a gift from the love of God, their devotion went to creation instead of to the Creator. In this way we, the whole of humanity, opened the Pandora's Box that lets loose division, death and a break with creation, which God gave us perfect and blessed (*cf.* Genesis 1, 31-2, 1-4). From then on human beings fell into a deep slumber and allowed trust in God to die in their heart (*cf.* *The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 75).

Recently a French bishop has posed the following questions: 'Doesn't the collective panic we are going through today reveal our distorted relationship with the reality of death? Isn't it a display of the anxiety that comes from the loss of God?' At one time or another, many of us have suffered the loss of someone dear to us in our families or of a friend. This is precisely the fear within us that surfaces with the corona virus pandemic: that we may lose someone dear to us or that we may see our own life or health in peril.

And yet we have received the proclamation that Jesus Christ is alive, risen, and that he is acting with power in our lives! Death and every evil have been conquered by him, and his love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (*cf.* Romans 5, 5). As Christians, we are asked in these circumstances, by way of prayer, to overcome this fear of death and to affirm, every day, Life. Every fear we experience is Godless, it does not come from ourselves; it is a tendency that leads us to lose our trust in God. That is why the main kind of fast we can practise at this time is fasting from thoughts, to ignore fear and to surrender and give way to the love of God. Moments for silence and disconnection from daily news are of great help.

Let us not be mastered by the fear generated by external noise. Pope Gregory the Great tells us that 'every time we are drawn outside ourselves by too much mental agitation, we are not "with ourselves", even though we think we are. Because we wander here and there, we do not see ourselves' (Dialogues II, Ch. 3, 5). During these days, let us be aware of what is most really ours, God's life in us, and let us not allow frantic anxieties to cause us to abandon this awareness. What we are now living through calls us to let go and ignore that sort of thoughts, to reverse the negative witness they give to us and come to see them as signs of the Life, Truth and Love that we encounter in the Word. Let us believe anew in the Word of our one true Teacher who says to us, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me, even though that person dies, will live; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' (John 11, 25-26). Let us listen every day to Christ who teaches us the love of the Father in the depth of our hearts, not to the fear taught by the world because 'In love there is no room for fear, but perfect love drives out fear' (1 John 4, 18).

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