

PRAYERS FOR COVID AND OTHER TIMES OF ISOLATION

I AM NOT ALONE

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.*

These reassuring words from Psalm 46
hold much needed comfort
at a time like right now
when I feel lost, vulnerable, afraid.

A virus has isolated me
from everyone, and everyone
from everyone else.

Yet somehow I know
that you, God, are with me.
You are my refuge, my strength, my help.

Not only for me. You are with us all.
With a parent's love you have so much room
No one has to feel left out, alone.

Lift us from this dark time
Shine your love into our hearts
that we might see all those dear to us
and holding them in love
lose the fear of being apart.

With the Psalmist I pray:
*We will not fear
though the earth should change
though its waters roar and foam
though sickness pervade the land
though people cannot meet –
for you are with us
our refuge, our strength, our help.*

I DWELL WITH GOD

*Lord, you have been our dwelling place
In all generations...
From everlasting to everlasting you are God.
[Psalm 90]*

You, God, are my dwelling place!
Here and now I live with you!
Even in isolation I am with you!
Though separated from loved ones
Cut off from my everyday life
I am not alone. You are with me.

I am grateful for the faith
that enables this confidence.
Especially now
when a virus stalks the streets
and disruption shakes the world.

I am grateful for your presence
in this time of uncertainty
with borders closed
and families scattered
and noise lost to silence.

I am grateful for your tender look
I see in those who care
and nurse the sick
and bring the meals
and smile with kindness in their eyes.

I am grateful for this dwelling place with you.

*All our miseries derive
from not being able to sit quiet
in a room alone.*

[Blaise Pascal, 1623-1662]

As I think on these words
penned so long ago
I bring them into my prayer
into my room
where I am alone.

A virus has shut us apart from each other.
Out of fear for our health
we have accepted quietness and
separation from the busyness of our lives.

In this quietness, this measured space,
I sense a closeness
and an emptying out of fear.
It is you, God of love and mercy
accompanying my aloneness.

I claim this time as treasure
Not sought but now held dear.
Not chosen but now a blessing
in being able to sit quiet
in a room alone.

*...whenever you pray, go into your room
and shut the door and pray to your Father
who is in secret... [Matthew 6:6]*

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