

How are you doing?

The last few days have been a struggle for me. There are times when I just get overwhelmed by the fatigue of life.

It's hard to believe that Saint Barnabas' journey began with the cancellation of services on Sunday, March 15. It's been 142 days.

My family has spent most of this time in isolation. Because Dylan is a Type 1 Diabetic and Melissa has Chronic Epstein Barr, we have limited our contact with others as much as possible. I don't know if this is the right thing to do or not. That is one of the things that makes this pandemic so challenging – there is a lot of self-doubt. I think we are doing the right thing but I'm never sure.

Everyone reading this blog has faced their challenges during this pandemic.

I've just started reading "The Book of Joy." It is the compilation of conversations between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu regarding lasting happiness. The two men offer an Invitation to Joy at the beginning of the book.

They write: "No dark fate determines the future. Each day and each moment, we are able to create and re-create our lives and the very quality of human life on our planet. This is the power we wield. Lasting happiness cannot be found in pursuit of any goal or achievement. It does not reside in fortune or fame. It resides only in the human mind and heart, and it is here that we hope you will find it." Archbishop Tutu adds "Discovering more joy does not, I'm sorry to say save us from the inevitability of hardship or heartbreak. In fact, we may cry more easily, but we will laugh more easily, too. Perhaps we are just more alive. Yet as we discover more joy, we can face more suffering in a way that ennobles rather than embitters. We have hardship without becoming hard. We have heartbreak with being broken."

For me, it's important to begin living some of this wisdom.

We may reflect on this time and conclude that it was the most challenging time of our lifetimes. But we must always strive to not allow it to define us. We must continually strive to see Christ in all this. We must continue to see the small miracles. We cannot be embittered, broken, and hard.

Prayer continues to serve as my life preserver. "Forgive me, help me not be discouraged, help me to do better." Even though some of Morning and Evening Prayers from William Barclay are difficult to read and some aren't always applicable, they always bring me closer to God. They open up a line of communication by the simple act of setting aside moments of the day to be still and be with God.

I have a long list of people that I am praying for in a little spiral notebook I am keeping.

Some have asked for prayers, others haven't. If you have anything for which you want prayers, please let me know (bur@dobbins.cc) and I will pray for it, them or you.

I have one story I want to finish with. I've shared this before in a sermon but some of you might not have heard the story.

When I entered the process to go to seminary, I was not sure it was the thing I needed to be doing. I had a meeting scheduled with the "Discernment Committee" at the Diocesan offices. This is a group of Priests and Lay People who "assess" your calling. A friend of mine said that she would pray for me during this meeting. The meeting started poorly. I was nervous and awkward. About 10 minutes into the meeting, things turned around and it was a spiritually affirming gathering. On the way back from the meeting, I called my friend who was praying. Before I even began to tell her about the meeting she said "I need to tell you, I'm embarrassed to say that I didn't start praying when the meeting began. I had someone unexpectedly in my office so I didn't start praying for you until 10 minutes after the meeting started." I responded by saying "That's weird. I was a disaster for the first 10 minutes and then everything fell into place." Don't underestimate the power of prayer.

If you're in need of a little music, here is a link to one of my favorite Stephen Curtis Chapman songs – "[Let us Pray](#)".