



Be Mindful of Other Epidemics

According to the updated directions from the officials of Shelby County, it appears that we will not be able to celebrate Palm Sunday since the directive is extended through April 7, 2020. This Sunday we will continue with a Sunday Devotional Audio Podcast. There was a very positive response from last Sunday's podcast. Again, this Sunday, we will try to provide access to the podcast through individual emails and through our website.

Please be mindful of other epidemics that have not gained the media or government attention that is due recognition and immediate attention. Currently, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. In 2018, there were 48,344 suicide deaths and 1,400,000 attempted suicides. The national cost of these suicides and self-injury attempts are estimated to be \$69 billion. Most suicides and suicide attempts are from middle-aged white men. There is a growing and alarming suicide rate among white farmers in this country (CDC statistics).

Also, in 2017, 2,232 people died in domestic homicides at the hands of an intimate partner. According to the CDC, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the U.S. have been victims of violence by an intimate partner. Overwhelmingly, these acts take place in the home.

Along with increased child sexual abuse, there will be a dramatic increase in victims of suicide, domestic homicides and domestic abuse during this unfortunate time in a sequestered nation. Additionally, there are current reports of increased alcohol abuse and a loss of sobriety during this time. I'm not sure why the social scientists and the CDC have not weighed in more about the increased cost of these epidemics during the COVID-19 crisis.

With this being said, I encourage all to pray for these victims during this time of increased stress and volatile circumstances. If you know anyone that may be enduring increased stress or depression from these "Safer at Home" restrictions, please reach out to them . . . and pray.

Along with my previous published list of recommendations, I will add: "Reach out to those in need."

- "Keep calm and carry on."
- "Take heart, do not be afraid."
- Pray for protection, healing and restoration.
- Fortify yourself with spiritual readings and study.
- Stand firm in our faith.
- Reach out to those in need.

May the Peace of the Lord that passes all understanding and circumstances of this life be with you!

Fr. Terry †