

## Spiritual Reflection

Few lessons from Corona Virus epidemic

James Areechira SVD.



The whole world is in the grip of Corona Virus and we have read about the tens of thousands of deaths reported from all over the world. New cases are being reported every day and leaders and the medical communities are being challenged to the utmost limit. Places like Churches, Mosques, Temples and Synagogues where people go to find peace and consolation are not yet fully opened. One can ask the question, does God care for the humanity? Why does God want human beings to suffer?

In Genesis chapter 2:15, it says, "Thus Lord God took the man and put him in the paradise of enjoyment, so that it would be attended and preserved by him". Even though the creation narrative is a story, the message of this story is that God created this world for human beings to enjoy, attend to it and preserve it. But can we say we are doing this? Are we not destroying the nature? Instead of enjoying, attending and preserving it we are exploiting it and destroying it. We are polluting the air, water and the land. Look at the air pollution indices of different countries, including Australia few months ago. The waters of how many rivers in the world are drinkable? How much of sea is polluted, and so many mammals like whales and dolphins are being affected? How much waste is dumped in the sea? We pollute the land with our waste. So we human beings are polluting our air, water and land because of our greed for wealth and profit. We are destroying the wild life for our food. We catch the God created animals from the forest and mix with them farm grown animals and the virus from the wild animals spreads to other animals and later on enters the human body. Remember, we are not the owners of this earth. It belongs to God and we are only the keepers of it for a short time. Suppose someone has given us a car for a short time to use and if we use it irresponsibly and damage it, will the owner be happy to continue to allow us to use and damage it further? Of course not. He may warn us or take back the vehicle away from our usage. In the same way God is giving us warning that we need to care for this earth. We are only the keepers of this earth and not the owners of it. We need to preserve the nature well according to wishes of the owner of it. This is what we are noticing now with blue skies, cleaner water, less activities in the sea and more freedom for the animals.

Secondly we have a duty to care for the fellow human beings because all of us are created in the image of God. God's spirit is present in every human being. We all are equal in the sight of God. Many times our attitude is like the attitude of Cain. In Genesis 4:9-11 it says, "And the Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And he responded: "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" And He said to him: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the land. Now, therefore, you will be cursed upon the land, which opened its mouth and received the blood of your brother at your hand."

In today's world, selfishness, greediness and ambition are given too much importance, so that all want to be rich, self-centered and successful. In the race to become rich some ambitious people do not care for the needs and lives of the poor and unfortunate. Many times people are judged by their wealth. There are a lot of unhealthy comparisons between people. It could be due to wealth, power, nationalities, color and education. This brings lots of divisions in the society and people are graded and treated differently. Our God is a God of justice. He will not allow too long the sufferings of his own people, especially the poor. During the Corona virus period we noticed billions and trillions of dollars wiped out from stock markets. We have seen at ASX (Australian Securities Exchange) the values of stocks in a few days come down by billions of dollars. The riches of some of the very rich people evaporated like smoke because of a virus. Even some rich and powerful people with their vast wealth and power were not spared from corona virus. The daughter of Portuguese billionaire Antonio Piera, president of the Santander Bank in Portugal, who died of Corona virus wrote about her father, "We are a wealthy family, but my father passed away alone, suffocating, looking for something free, which is air... money stayed at home." The corona virus pandemic brought families together and they have more time for each other. The children get more time with the parents and the partners have more time for each other

God is the master and He is in control. We need to protect and preserve the earth, our temporary home here, which is a gift from our creator. He created other human beings as our brothers and sisters and we need to respect and love one another more. Let this Corona virus crisis open our minds and hearts to hear the cries of our earth to see the need of our brothers and sisters.

## 神師的話—從冠狀病毒大流行當中汲取的幾個教訓

田雅超神父

全球在冠狀病毒肆虐下，因此病死亡的人數以萬計，每日都有新增個案的報導，各國政府領袖及醫療團隊被受極大的挑戰。宗教場所如聖堂、清真寺、廟宇及會堂等仍未能完全開放予信友，讓他們在那裡尋找平安和安慰。人們可能提問：天主是否關心人類？為何天主讓人蒙受痛苦？

《創世紀》第二章記載：「上主天主將人安置在伊甸的樂園內，叫他耕種，看守樂園。」（創2:15）雖然天主創世的論述以故事形式表達，內含的訊息是叫人樂在伊甸園中、治理及保守她。但是，我們能自認有這樣做嗎？我們是否正在摧毀大自然？在取用大自然當中作樂的我們，是否只是濫用資源而不思保護她？我們污染了空氣、水源和土地。看看數個月前各國地區（包括澳洲）的空氣污染指數，看看世界各大河流的健康情況，看看海洋的污染程度！我們在河流排放的污染物，使人類不能安全地飲用河水；我們放進海洋的各種污染物，影響著海豚和鯨魚的生態。為了利潤和財富，我們人類不斷污染空氣、水源和土地。請記著：我們不是地球的主人，而是暫時獲天主託管的代理人。舉一個例：朋友委託我們照顧他的車子，平時可借用代步，若我們在使用時毫無承擔地肆意奔馳，導致損壞，朋友會繼續讓我們借用他的車子嗎？當然不會！即使他願意再給我們機會，必先發出警告，免致日後永久收回。同樣，今天我們接獲天主的警告，要按天主的旨意小心地、好好地治理大自然，因為我們不是大自然的主人，而是託管人。且讓我們看看今天蔚藍的天空、稍為清澈的河水、海洋相對的平靜，及動物相對的自由！

人類亦是大自然的一份子，我們均是按天主的肖像而造成，天主的神既臨於每人心中，因此我們有責任互相照顧，在天主面前，人人平等。但是很多時，我們的態度如同加音一樣；《創世紀》第四章這樣記載：上主對加音說：「你弟弟亞伯爾在那裡？」他答說：「我不知道，難道我是看守我弟弟的人？」上主說：「你作了什麼事？聽！你弟弟的血由地上向我喊冤。你現在是地上所咒罵的人，地張開口由你手中接收了你弟弟的血。」（創 4:9-11）

在今日的世界，自私、貪婪和野心佔據人靈，各人心中只有自我，追求財富和成功。在這追名逐利的競爭中，野心悻悻的人看不到窮困者的需要或不幸。財富是量度人的指標，同時，人們不斷以財富、權力、學歷、國籍，甚至膚色來互相量度。這不良的競爭帶來社會的分裂，人們被分等級，待遇也不同。但是，我們的天主是公義的天主，祂不會容許祂的子民長期受苦，尤其那些窮困的。在這疫情期間，成億上兆的美元從全球股票市場中消失。澳洲的證券交易在短短數天內也崩潰下來，有些人的財富迅速蒸發了三份之一。冠狀病毒沒有對有權勢或富有的人寬容，他們也不能逃避疫症。葡萄牙億萬富豪安東里奧·比雅拉（Antonio Piera），是山丹達銀行（Santander Bank）的總裁，最近因冠狀肺炎去世。據說他的女兒如此悼念：「我們是富有的家族，但父親孤獨地、竭力地尋求一絲空氣——那原是不費分文而可取用的空氣——當中去世，財富則留在家裡。」這疫情讓家庭有更多時間相聚，從而拉近了各成員之間的關係——子女與父母、丈夫與妻子。

天主是主人，祂掌控一切。我們必須保護地球——我們這個臨時居所——因為地球是創造者天主賜予的禮物。天主也創造了人，讓人成為我們的兄弟姊妹，因此我們該互相尊重和愛護。就讓目前的危機打開我們的心靈，使我們聆聽到地球哭泣之聲，以及兄弟姊妹們所發出的求助吶喊！。

## COVID-19 的正能量

Anthony LI

「祂未曾應許天常蔥藍，祂未曾應允花兒常在，祂卻恩許祂的慈愛常在。」

不幸地在去年新型冠狀病毒開始現世，百多個國家都有感染，直至現在全球大流行。除了人命的損失，經濟的下滑帶來的後果就更加深遠。負面的影響是那麼多，那麼大，是不是我們從中看不到未來？當我們能冷靜地從另一個角度去看，我們也不難發現 COVID-19 帶來的正能量。

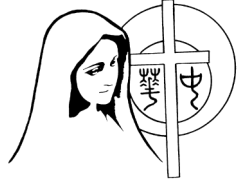
在個人方面，我們有較多的時間去靜思，再反省一下自己實際所需，生命的方向。也可以再留意自己的身體狀況、起居飲食習慣，並且尋求方法去改進。心靈上的需要可能也察覺到一個新方向。

在社會中，人們彼此互相關懷，守望相助的精神，能清晰地再浮現出來。全民抗疫，更激勵了人民的公德心，並且互相守護。

國與國之間，由於大家都專注抗疫，雖然仍有互相追究的唇槍舌戰，但令人民流離失所，充滿血腥味的戰爭，總算暫時停頓下來。論到醫療物資，各國更加互相分施。在科研疫苗，及藥物的研究方面，大家更彼此學習，共同創新。

環境方面，重見蔚藍的天空，使很多人鼓舞跳躍。減少了工業排泄物後，江河及海洋再次清澈，生機勃勃。空氣污染也降至低點，到處都呈現著生氣洋溢的景象。

這場疫症，驟眼看來好像是大災難。但長遠來看，也可算是我們人生在世中一個學習的好課題、一個重生的好機會。這也就是「祂慈愛常在」的鐵證。



澳洲墨爾本天主教  
華人信友團體  
Catholic Chinese  
Community of Melbourne  
(CCCM)

地址 Address :

永援聖母堂 Our Lady of Perpetual Succour  
299 Elgar Road, Surrey Hills, Vic 3127 (Melway 47A12)

電話 : (03) 9890 7798 傳真 : (03) 9890 7783

網址 Website : [www.cccmelbourne.org.au](http://www.cccmelbourne.org.au)

電郵 e-mail : [info@cccmelbourne.org.au](mailto:info@cccmelbourne.org.au)

稿件電郵 Publisher e-mail : [editorccc@gmail.com](mailto:editorccc@gmail.com)

**神師 Chaplain**

Fr James Areechira SVD

田雅超神父

Mobile 0416 731 129

**牧民助理 Pastoral Assistant**

Sister Bernadette Cheng

鄭嫻修女 (03) 9836 0220

**會長 President**

Anthony Li 李世元 0409858203

**副會長 Vice-President**

Emerald Siu 蕭慧婷 0430371175

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