

Religion at the Academy

Jan 9, 2022

Light in Darkness

So we start a new year with COVID figures looking dismal, and life seemingly taking a back step. I was in Shoprite the other day, and the shelves are looking rather bare. Have we made any progress? I do find myself wearing my mask everywhere again, despite the fact that I was feeling a lot more secure at the end of last year going without it.

Are we better off? Who knows? We do, however, have something that is really important. We have prayer.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

1 John 5: 14

Prayer seems like such a passive way of dealing with everything that is going on, but it is the most active thing that some of us can do at the moment. If just for the time it takes to pray, prayer offers release from worry, release from fear, release from believing that we have control at this point of our surroundings.

When I was in the 4th Grade, the world went through one of those bizarre times when everyone believed that the world was ending. We've done these crazy things before. Mayan calendars? Ancient prophecies? My friends and I were really worried about this. If the weather was too cold, I wondered whether there would be another ice age. If the

weather was too warm, I wondered whether the sun was exploding. Eventually, I gathered enough courage to talk to one of the nuns at my school. She was very kind. I think her name was Sister Shona, and she told me that all of these things were out of my control. What was in my control was how I felt about these things. Sometimes, taking quiet time to process these things through prayer could be the difference between panic and acceptance. She taught me a simple mantra that I use to this day when I am feeling overwhelmed: **Jesus, Mercy. Mary, Help.** I find myself saying it over and over again, especially when I feel the walls closing in a little. It always helps. Always!

Think about prayer as an alternative to panic. Starting the day with prayer might set the tone for what follows. Ending the day with prayer might help to process what has happened throughout the day. Taking small moments during the day to spend a minute or two communing with God might give some respite from immediate stress.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18