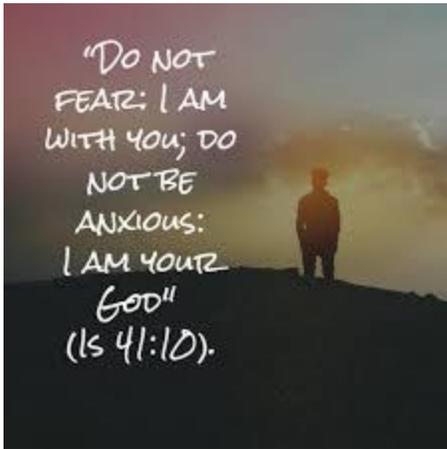


FATHER ANTON'S WORDS OF WISDOM: October has arrived; the beauty of autumn and the crisp air



remind us that winter is just around the corner. The trees are shedding their leaves and reminding us how important it is to let things go so that we may experience new life. This year has been difficult for many, and there are projections of as many as a thousand deaths a day in Ontario from Covid-19 according to medical experts. Many are still fearful, many are still vulnerable, and sadly there are still many who think they are untouchable by this possibly deadly virus. The idea that caring for one another seems to have gone by the wayside. Infections are mostly among those 20-39 years old, who will likely for the most part, have no major symptoms or problems, but I often wonder if they realize that even though they may feel fine, they could be the ones to infect their mother, father, grandmother or grandfather, how will they

deal with knowing they are the cause of the death of a loved one. Jesus gives us in His teachings two commandments which are paramount to all the others..."**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And the second is like it..."Love your neighbour as yourself.**" (Mark 12:30-31, Luke 10:27.) John reminds us in his epistle, that "**if we love, God lives in us and us in Him.**" (1 John: 4:16). Our society is slowly moving away from a community that looks out and cares for one another, to one that seems to care only for themselves and their own comfort. People simply being asked to wear a mask to protect others cry that their rights are being infringed upon. I wonder what these people would do if they ever experienced any "real" hardships. Many of our parents and especially our grandparents endured pandemics, the Great Depression, Wars, and rations. They learned through these hardships not to whine about what was happening around them, but to look out for one another. When they thought there was nowhere else to turn, they turned to their faith. They trusted in God, prayed and then actively assisted in the answer to their prayers. Many I am sure worried about the future, not for themselves, but for their children, and I am positive that if the higher risk of infection and death in this pandemic was for their children, they would do everything possible to protect them. As Christians we are reminded that we belong to the Mystical Body of Christ; we are a "community of believers," and as such we are called to care and respect one another. Throughout the gospels Jesus teaches us what this means. Prayer is always followed through by actions. We can pray for the poor, but if we do not help, what good does it do? We can pray for the sick, but if we do not offer them comfort and words of encouragement, what good does it do? We can pray to end abortion and euthanasia, but if we are not there to offer "real" support rather and words, what good does it do? In these times of uncertainty it is important not to give in to worry and despair. I have two favorite passages from Scripture that I have always tried to model my life on, regardless of what was happening in my life or around me. They are passages that should give us much comfort and remind us that God is ever present, enveloping us with love, assuring us of counsel, all we need do is listen, and trust in His love and promises. **"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you-you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek**

first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:25-34)

And Paul in his letter to the Philippians: ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4: 4-9)

Let us live our lives in trust and love of God and each other. As Thanksgiving approaches, let us count our blessings and be more aware of how gratefulness can change our lives. This Pandemic will pass, we will have learned many lessons and hopefully will have grown in faith and trust in God. We are God's children, we belong to Him and we belong to one another. I wish for you all a Blessed Thanksgiving and remind you that to truly celebrate it begins with **"Thanksgiving!"**

God bless you all!