

**FATHER ANTON'S WORDS OF WISDOM:** Well summer has arrived and it is hot! My late grandmother



on these days would remark "if hell is hotter than this, we'd better change our ways!" I often think of her and her wisdom. Her humor and wit got me and her through many difficult times. She was practical both in life and in faith. As things now are slowly re-opening during this pandemic, I think many have already lost some common sense. As I am out and about, I see less people using masks to protect others and themselves, social distancing is quickly going by the wayside, and it seems we have forgotten that we are in this pandemic for the long run. Christ was always practical

with faith as well. He spoke in a language that the people understood and was always ready to meet them where they were at. This is why the people were drawn to Him. Jesus was not intimidating, there was a charisma about him and people were drawn to him. His message was simple, "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all things will be given you." Too often we think of our prayer life as "gimmee this, or gimmee that," prayers that often make God into our person "Genie." Our prayer should be simple; it is about relationship. All prayer should begin and start with GRATEFULNESS, and from this energy of thanksgiving our words will flow. Think of how you talk with your parents or your closest friends; there is intimacy there, and this should be how we relate to God. Christ taught us to call God "Abba" and word that literally translates to "papa or daddy." In this way our relationship is one of love and trust, there is not fear when expressing our feelings. God is bigger than our pettiness or our anger, and sometimes we need to vent even to Him. I know throughout my life this has happened to me, and here I am, not struck by lightning and still here! All I can tell you from my own experience is that through all these times when I needed to "tell it like it is," it has drawn me closer and allows me to quickly let go to those things I have no control over - I give it to God and what will be will be. Our prayer life is also not just about words. Every day from when you wake to when you sleep should be a prayer. Everything we say and do is an offering to God. Therefore, it is important to be conscious of the presence of Christ always. I do not walk alone, He walks with me, and in every instance if I am aware of His presence it changes the energy of my day. That isn't to say that there will be times when you say to yourself, "Enough, I can't do this anymore." It isn't until I can remove the "I" from this sentence that I can truly feel Christ working and acting in my life. When I change the "I" to "We" I have come to know that I am not alone, that "I" don't have to do this or that alone, but rather with Christ "We" can get over whatever turmoil or hurdle we are dealing with or lies ahead. During this pandemic there has been a lot of praying going on, but the words of our prayers have to be followed through. There is no sense in asking God to help us deal with Covid, find a cure or a vaccine, if we are not willing to participate in that prayer. God works through human hands and hearts, and the knowledge of our health care workers and professions comes from Him. When they are guiding, God is speaking. Simple things like continuing our social distancing... "Better six feet apart, than six feet under" is a popular saying now. Masks are not and should not be a political statement. When you or I wear a mask we are saying "I care about you." Yes, our world is not the same as it used to be, but these times give us an opportunity to re-evaluate our priorities, to assess our spiritual health, to draw closer to one another and to Christ. My late grandmother always said "The sun always shines after a storm, and there is always good that can come from bad." So while we hope for more normal days ahead, we see for the most part and more compassionate world that cares for one another and this is good.

**LET US PRAY:** Jesus, you came into the world that we might be able to experience the fullness of life. This fullness isn't always fun and games, but also the difficult times that allow us to draw closer to you and to your Father. Help me to be aware of your presence daily. May the words I

**what I speak in prayer be followed through by my actions, and in all times and in all places may I live in gratefulness for each new day, each new challenge and each new triumph. Amen.**