



“Pray, hope and don’t worry”

By Ivica Covic

On 23 September, we celebrated the feast day of one of the most loved saints of modern time – Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, commonly known as Padre Pio.

St Padre Pio, famous for receiving the Stigmata, performing miracles, being an extraordinary Confessor and even having the ability to levitate and be at two places at once (how awesome is that!) famously said:

“Pray, hope, don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayers.”

But in a time where we are unable to physically receive the sacraments, the LGAs within our Diocese are in extended lockdown, Covid cases still present in our state, and when many are struggling with the impacts of lockdown whether it be psychological, economic or social, how are we supposed to not to worry?! It seems way too simple to just pray, hope and not worry. I am sure that at least at some point in this pandemic, we have indeed prayed to our merciful God to hear our intentions, but have we felt listened to?

Padre Pio lived during the time of the Spanish Flu. Not only that, but he also contracted it and survived it. He also suffered from other significant illnesses such as cancer and severe arthritis. So let us allow ourselves to be consoled by the words of a saint who is relevant to our pandemic situation. Padre Pio knew what it was like to bear pain and suffering and yet still experience a profound joy for Christ, His Church and want to share it with others.

We often find ourselves worrying about many things. Let us recall the interactions of Saints Mary and Martha with Jesus in Chapter 10 of St Luke’s Gospel. We recall that Martha was doing all the preparations and serving whilst Mary was at the feet of Jesus. Martha then got upset and approached Jesus, asking Him to demand that Mary help her. But Jesus then replies:

“Martha, you are worried and upset about many things. But only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, and it will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41-42).

One thing especially that stands out to me from this Gospel passage is that Martha seemed so immersed in her worries, where unlike Mary, she did not realise and see the glory of God before her. We each have our own questions that we ask God: “Why do I have to be doing this all on my own?” “Why is He not listening to me?” “How am I supposed to pay all these expenses?” “Why me?” “What do you want of me, God?” And I’m sure that when we ask

these questions, we expect a straightforward answer. And when we don't get a straightforward answer, or even we feel like we don't get an answer, then we keep asking and asking, and our worries become blinding and restrictive.

What Mary did is that she drew as close to Jesus as she could. She was not restrained by her worries, and she realised the glory before her and placed herself at the feet of Jesus – both literally and figuratively. Let us then, like Mary and also like Padre Pio, place ourselves and our worries at the feet of Jesus who is our hope and who gives us peace.

Being hopeful does not mean being naïve to the various problems we are facing individually and as a society. Being hopeful means putting our trust and faith in God – the conqueror all fear, doubt and death.

Saint Padre Pio, pray for us! Saints Martha and Mary, pray for us!

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