



**PRAYER – REFLECTION**  
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## LEARNING FROM THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC

**G**od our Father, we learnt that we are not in charge of this world and our lives. We are so fragile. A small virus has brought the whole world to its knees, without distinction of nation, caste, colour, status, wealth or intelligence. The whole world was affected and is still affected. Our science and technology, our artificial intelligence, our learning, our health departments, the wealth of the few and our super rich, our stars (star actors, singers, models, pop stars), our armaments, our space rockets and huge skyscrapers, our amusement parks were all humbled before the face of a small virus. Ultimately even politicians had to fall back to you and we stared at the truth or reality that we are not in control of this world. There is a super power governing us. We had forgotten the reality of your mighty presence. Thank you God for reminding us that you are in control and that we are but small, frail beings struggling for our daily existence. You are the master of the universe! We bow in humble adoration and surrender!

God our Father, you opened our eyes to the reality of human

suffering and that all our medical science and technology could not save the lives of thousands of people. More than 328,827,870 people were affected by the virus (only the reported cases) and around 5,557,760 have died worldwide. In India alone more than 37,380,253 people were affected by this virus and 486,482 have reportedly died but these may not be the real numbers. The images of people waiting at overcrowded hospitals overwhelmed us in grief and scenes of people struggling for oxygen outside hospitals kept us shocked beyond belief. The crowded cremation grounds, the cemeteries overflowing with people waiting to be urgently buried or cremated made us aware of the shortness and fragility of human life. The scenes of old people being buried without anyone to assist them made us cry. Many elderly people lost their lives all over the world due to carelessness and neglect also. We were made to learn many lessons like learning to love when people are still alive and living with us because we do not know anything about the timing of our final call. It made us understand that we have to hurry

up to live meaningful lives of love and compassion because life is short and we have to learn to make it sweet. It made us realize that it is good to appreciate people close to us when they are alive. You made a small but deadly virus teach us a number of precious lessons.

We also stared with grief at the number of poor people and middle class people who had lost their jobs or were paid half salaries; people who had to close their small businesses, people who could not pay their house rent or school fees for their children. A lot of people had to sell their jewels or make use of their savings to survive during these difficult times. It humbled us to know how grateful we should be when we have a roof over our heads and food on our table. How thankful we should be! It was disheartening to see our children locked at home without being able to go to school. The impact on so many poor children who have no digital means to continue their learning make us tremble with fear. It is disheartening to realize that a big number of college students and final year school students will be known as the Corona batch and what will their future be? Many poor children from the primary schools have not started learning to read and write. Children are struggling to concentrate or to sit in one place when they return to school after so many months of home schooling. Many children have started working to help their parents to bring some food to the table. We pray that you have mercy on these your children and young people. Give them the courage to dream and to overcome these obstacles with creativity and hard work.

Dear Lord, you made us realize that there are people who suffer more than us. The images of migrant guest workers returning to their villages made us open our eyes to another reality and another world of suffering and pain. The sight of thousands of people returning on foot with their small belongings and their children on their shoulders or heads, shocked us out of our dreams. We were grumbling about our little pains and sufferings and here we were staring at thousands of people walking hundreds of kilometres to reach the place they call their own. The stories in the newspapers that many of them were also killed by speeding vehicles on the way home made us aware about the dangers of daily life. So many women who worked as house maids have not had a chance to work for many months. And we wonder how they are surviving? Help us to be thankful and to open our eyes to the sufferings and pain of the others around us!

We learnt that we have not respected nature as we should. The virus is also the fruit of eating what we should leave alone. During the days of lockdown, when cars and buses, aeroplanes and helicopters, private jets and cruise ships came to a grinding halt, we saw nature blooming, flourishing. Factories and hotels, restaurants and businesses big and small, shops and malls were closed. But we could once again hear birds singing in our own courtyards and in our campuses. They were taking back the

place that rightfully belonged to them (though for a little while). The human race will forget their mistakes and once again greed and competition will raise their ugly heads and the flowers and the green grass, the trees and plants will once again lower their beautiful faces in sadness. It was so wonderful to see the blue sky so clear and spotless. There was less pollution and less smog and smoke in the air. We could breathe better. We could spot the stars at night and the moon looked more radiant.

Dear Lord, we learnt that we need each other. The ever busy businessmen, IT professionals, the daily wage labourers, movie stars, the guest labourers, the man on the move had to stop and spend their days at home. The family became a place of importance and healing. It also became a place of worship. Some families made use of this opportunity to grow in love and others in hatred. But we all came to know that family is the centre of our life and it is that which gives meaning to our earthly life and is a foretaste of heaven.

Dear Lord, our churches, temples, mosques and other places of worship were closed, including the Cathedrals and the Basilicas but you made sure that every home became a church, a place of worship. The families gathered together around their altars and around the TV at times to take part in community worship. You helped us to recognize that the home is the first place of worship and the faith in the family is that which will help us to live a meaningful spirituality. We learned to depend on you with faith. Like the apostles on the sinking boat we reached out to you with faith and hope, knowing well that only in you we have life and that you are our only hope and that you are our way, the truth and the life. The denial of Holy Communion and other Sacraments reminded us of the difficult situations in various countries where people are not free to worship and they are denied the basic right to worship you!

In this moment of  
crisis, we pray for  
God's mercy and  
healing for the sick, for  
health workers, for the  
distressed and  
disheartened, our  
children who are  
struggling to get back  
to school and our  
young people who are  
looking at their future  
with fear.





God our Father, you also opened our eyes to the beauty of sharing. Even a street tea seller was preparing lunch packets for the affected. People were reaching out to others in need. A number of good Samaritans came alive. Some were carrying oxygen to the dying. Young girls on their bikes were rushing around city lanes carrying oxygen, medicine and other essentials for the sick. Others were supplying food to the nurses and doctors who were overworked. Good Samaritans were organizing and cooking meals for the families in lockdown areas affected by the virus. Others were busy reaching out to the poor on the street corners and under bridges.

Children were breaking their little boxes with savings to help those in need. People were reaching out in creative ways to help others in need. Some big musicians came out with lockdown music to collect money for those in need. There were auto drivers who were giving a free ride to the affected. Some good hearted teachers were spending their own time and money to reach out to their poor students. We came to realize that our real heroes are not our film stars, our super stars, our sport stars, our pop stars but ordinary citizens who do not appear on our newspapers and televisions – our doctors and nurses, our corporation workers, our volunteers, some good police men and women and other such people.

The pandemic lockdown made us stop and look at ourselves. We were able to observe how many useless things we gather for ourselves on our journey. We learnt what real luxury is, namely, love, our families, our friends, the service we render to humanity. It is not about our fancy cars, our cruise ships, our expensive outings, our makeup kits and other materialistic baggage. The closed malls and shops made us realize how much of our money, time and energy is spent on crazy shopping for the sake of shopping. We learned to look at what is essential for a good and meaningful life. We were able to say, “This is enough!”

Lord Jesus, give us the grace to hear your voice through

these events. May we learn from these difficult experiences. Give us the strength to continue working for your kingdom in this time of pandemic. Do not allow us to be indifferent to those who today suffer the loss of a loved one, or who suffer from the absence of work. And give us the courage to accompany and to walk by the side of those who suffer these days. May we understand that only by standing on the side of poor and by becoming servants we can enable your kingdom to flourish. At this time of sorrow, incomprehension and tragedy help us to stand together in this fight against not only the pandemic but also the indifference of the super-rich and the apathy of our politicians.

God our Father, a small virus has challenged the entire world. It has challenged our craving for wealth, our arms race, our greed and selfishness that pollutes the world, our divisions based on language, race and religion. It has challenged us to understand that all our science and technology and other advancements are not enough. We have also brutally polluted this beautiful world because of our greed and love for extreme comfort and this has made nature to react with vengeance. We have seen unexpected and unseen floods in many parts of Europe and in India. We are already seeing the impact of climate change with our own eyes. Let us remember the future generations that have to continue to live on this planet home.

Help us to care for our mother earth – our home and safeguard the environment for the future generations. In this moment of crisis, we pray for God’s mercy and healing for the sick, for health workers, for the distressed and disheartened, our children who are struggling to get back to school and our young people who are looking at their future with fear. Give courage and strength to those who have been orphaned or lost the one whom they loved most. Give strength and wisdom to those who have lost jobs and a means of living. Give them all your strength, hope and courage to move on and help us all to create a better and safer world for all, especially the poor and marginalized. Amen!

