

MEDITATING ON DEATH DURING A PANDEMIC by Fr Thomas Reese SJ Part 2

Given the overwhelming numbers of deceased in New York and elsewhere in the USA, and still in northern Italy and Spain, we can read this meditation in Christian solidarity with all who mourn their family members.

Part 1 was posted on 24th March. That part ended as follows:

Here are some things we might think about doing during this pandemic when we meditate on death.

First, we need to think about family. Pope Francis says that the most important words in a family are "Thank you" and "I am sorry."

Granted that the elderly are most susceptible to the coronavirus, call home and say, "Thank you." Thank your parents for all the sacrifices they made for you. Be specific. This may be your last chance. True, they were not perfect parents, but they did the best they could. If you are a parent now, you understand that.

The author continues:

Tell them that you are sorry for being self-centered and immature and for not telling them often enough that you love them. If they are already dead, don't worry, they can still hear you.

Parents, call your children. The clock is ticking; your time is running out. Tell them how proud you are of them. How happy you are that you had them. Tell them that you love them and are sorry you were not a better parent. Tell them that they are the best thing that ever happened to you. Tell them that when you are gone, they will be fine and you will cheer for them from heaven.

Then call your friends and those who have been important in your life. Tell them how much they mean to you. Thank them for sticking with you when you were a jerk or just boring.

And if you are really brave, call a couple of enemies and tell them you are sorry for whatever you did to pour coals on the fires of your dispute. Tell them you want to heal this wound, to be reconciled. If it doesn't work, if they hang up on you, let it go.

If you know anyone who is sick, send them prayers and best wishes. If you call them, keep it short; this is about them not you.

And finally, if we make it through all this, don't forget we will still die someday. So let's use the time left for us to make this world a better place by being kind to people and planet Earth before we die.

Being a week in quarantine, I guess I should practice what I preach.

But for a Christian, death is never the end. We believe in the resurrection, in life after death. So I especially thank God for life and the beautiful world he gave us and for his son who loved us and led the way.

So the next time you see a beautiful sunset, raise your glass and praise the Lord. And may we all party in heaven.