

Eternal Truths in a passing Pandemic

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In March 2022, we shall mark two years of an Indian post-COVID-19 era. As we look back, we have coughed, gasped, masked, buried, cremated, locked, unlocked and pushed ourselves through many new words. Corona, COVID-19, pandemic, RT-PCR, antigen, new normal, masks, double-mask, social distancing, Covishield, Covaxin, vaccine certificate, boosters — all these and more caused fear and uncertainty initially, but now they are part of our lifestyle and vocabulary. **In time, novelty becomes normal; and uncertainty turns to familiarity.**

The word that wearies us now is ‘Variants’ – specifically Omicron and Deltacron. It generates negative emotions that take us back to March 2020. Before we succumb to these emotions, plunging ourselves into a future not so different from the past, it would be good to reflect on three truths that this pandemic has affirmed (or must affirm) in the faithful.

1. *For He wounds, but He binds up; He strikes, but His hands heal. (Job 5:18)*

Job went through a pandemic of sorts - a scourge personally designed for him by Satan “the accuser”. Yet, Job’s devotion is unique in that he sees God’s hands in everything, even affliction. God is the master designer who allows struggle and strife as a necessary means to navigate life and eternal life. Let us not be surprised that God’s plan includes pandemics; but experience that even pandemics cannot take us away from Him, or Him away from us.

2. *To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often - Winston Churchill*

These new corona variants teach us something important; we need to adapt. Life isn’t stagnant, and neither should we seek such security. We weaken ourselves with the excuse: “Change is easier in youth, but not as we grow older.” Pope Francis is changing himself and the Church, even at the age of 85! The hallmark of greatness is adaptation. This mutating living virus will ensure we change; positive or not depends on us! The hour we change faster or even before the new variant is the day the pandemic ends.

3. *All who shared the faith owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions, and distributed the proceeds among themselves, according to what each one needed (Acts 2:44)*

What we need to get through any crisis already exists within our community. This is the eternal insight the early Church offers us. It requires those who have time, talent, ideas, finances to offer them; those who don’t have them, to receive it; and someone to facilitate such an exchange. Our greatest treasure is not in the quantifiable, but in people and relationships, especially those who are ‘undeserving’ or in misfortune.

Questions for Reflection

1. Mention two insights you received while reading the above article.
2. Have I been able to accept that God allows suffering to enter our lives for a greater purpose? Have I been able to see and spread the good news in this truth?

3. What are some areas in which the Holy Spirit is calling me to adapt in my personal, family and community life? Have I accepted this call from the Holy Spirit, am I struggling to accept it, or have I given up on Him?

4. Have I utilized this pandemic period as an opportunity to help others in my vicinity? Has this help been based on their needs or on what I think they need?