



My Dear People of God,

As we find ourselves in this time of uncertainty, prayer for our personal peace of mind and heart is urgent at this time. This month of October is the month dedicated to the Holy Rosary. If you and your families have not yet embraced this powerful prayer form, I highly recommend that you do so. It will bring many essential graces for you and your family at this time of difficulty.

Also, with the upcoming elections, we might possibly experience an increase in civil unrest and lawlessness throughout our nation. These times are not to be taken lightly. It appears, as if, we are approaching a crossroad of cultural transition. I was recently sent an article by Fr. Richard Rohr and I immediately thought of you, the people of the Diocese of Stockton. I know that the pandemic along with our political climate has impacted you all greatly and I urge you to remember that Christ lives within each one of us and that we must not get overly distracted or worried by everything that is going on around us. Instead, we must find God's grace within us.

In Fr. Rohr's message he quotes Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish woman who endured much suffering and injustice in a concentration camp. "There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God. Sometimes I am there, too....And that is all we can manage these days and also all that really matters: that we safeguard that little piece of You. God, in ourselves." As Fr. Rohr points out, when she says "You, God" she is direct and personal. There is a Presence within her, even as she is surrounded by so much suffering.

In the past six months we have endured the pandemic, fires, poor air quality and civil unrest. On the horizon, we have the election, the appointment of a new Supreme Court Judge and many other things that could lead to more chaos. Through it all, we must remember as believers, to restore the Divine Center by holding it and fully occupying it ourselves. We must "*safeguard that little piece of You, God*" as Etty Hillesum writes. No matter who wins the election or who gets appointed Supreme Court Judge, we cannot let that consume us. Great would be the injury to ourselves if we dwell in these worries for any length of time.

In his reflection Fr. Richard Rohr reminds us:

"God cannot abide with us in a place of fear.

God cannot abide with us in a place of ill will or hatred.

God cannot abide with us inside a nonstop volley of claim and counterclaim.

God cannot abide with us in endless flow of online punditry and analysis.

God cannot speak inside of so much angry noise and conscious deceit.

God cannot be born except in a womb of love. So offer God that womb."

To offer God that "womb of love" takes an enormous effort on the part of us all. It is important to not be caught up in "claim and counterclaim...angry noise and conscious deceit." We must remember that we are brothers and sisters in Christ who must care for one another. This can be difficult to do as we face the daily challenge of navigating our way through endless 24-hour news cycles, spinning stories that seemingly pit one against the other. As such, I join Fr. Richard Rohr in encouraging you to be self-aware and conscience of how much media you consume whether that be television, social media, or print media.



As a spiritual practice, be mindful of your media consumption and leave room for God; remember to care for one another by checking on your fellow community members, volunteering for good causes and helping those less fortunate than you. In doing so, you will notice God's grace grow within you.

On October 7, as we honor the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, let us turn to her asking her intercession to assist us to know and trust her son, Jesus, as we seek the peace of mind and heart that He can only give us. God bless you.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary of Fátima, pray for us. Amen.

In the Peace of Christ,

Bishop Myron J. Cotta