



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
St. Paul reminds us today:

**Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 4:6-7).

I would say that at all times we need to be reminded of this, but especially now, as we continue to deal with the effects of COVID-19, a polarized political system, violence throughout the United States and the world, and any other personal problems we may have. St. Paul tells us to have *no anxiety*. This reminds me of the famous line of St. Padre Pio, “Pray, hope, and don’t worry. Worry is useless.”

Do we allow worry and anxiety to weigh us down? Do we take our eyes off Jesus, and end up focused on our problems. The thing is, when we look at our problems they look huge! How can we ever overcome them?! Yet, Jesus is bigger! In the immortal words of Larry the Cucumber (see “VeggieTales”) “God is bigger than the boogiemani!” Jesus is not only bigger than our problems, He is *infinitely bigger!* Our problems really are smaller than ants next to the Empire States Building in comparison to Jesus. Yet, because of His infinite love for us, each of our problems is also very important to Jesus. He loves us so much! He wants to help us through our problems. Sometimes He doesn’t just take them away because He sees the larger picture and knows how enduring our trials will strengthen us and help us to grow, but He never *likes* to see us suffer.

St. Paul’s guidance is not just about “ignoring” our problems. Rather, it is taking them to the Heart of Jesus. He tells us to make our requests known to God. You see, this is prayer. Not that we speak words to the ceiling, without hope of being heard, but rather an intimate conversation with the God of the universe. We do this not just in petition, but in “prayer and petition, with thanksgiving.” We spend time with Jesus and invite Him into our deepest problems and struggles. As we do, we are giving Him permission to act in these areas. As with the “Our Father,” though, we are to say, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

It comes down to this: **Do we trust God?** At the very beginning, Adam and Eve walked with God. Satan made them doubt God’s love for them and told them to snatch at equality with God. Every sin, every problem since then has led to worry or anxiety because we don’t believe in the love of God, we don’t trust that He truly is a “good, good Father.” We try to run our lives, not believing that His will is for our happiness and glory.

If we give ourselves over to God, if we offer to Him all of our troubles with trust that He, in His grandeur and love, will walk with us through them and help us to overcome all of them, then we will find that **“peace of God that surpasses all understanding.”** Like Blessed Solanus Casey said, “Thank God ahead of time.” This is a great act of trust, as we offer to God our troubles, and thank Him that He *is* taking care of them. St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta had a similar practice. When praying the “Quick Novena” (nine *Memorares* to Our Blessed Mother), she would immediately add a tenth *Memorare* in thanksgiving that Our Lady was answering the petition and taking care of the problem.

As we continue to go through troubling times, let us look to God with confidence in His love. Let us surrender our anxiety and worry to Him, and with **“everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.”** In that trust in God’s care, we will find the peace of God!