News
Opinion





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March 25, 2020
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We are in a time of self-quarantine, shutdowns and lockdowns and social distancing. As we isolate ourselves amid the coronavirus pandemic that is bringing sweeping changes to our daily routines, how do we find hope and connection? NCR asked readers to share a story of a kind deed they have witnessed or participated in. We also asked readers how their faith helped them to deal with the crisis. You can share your thoughts by answering this survey. Responses have been edited for length and clarity.

I saw a group of high school students who had activities on their spring break trip canceled use their free time to volunteer at the food bank to pack up boxes with two weeks' worth of dry goods for low-income families and seniors.



For me and my family, spending as much time outside as possible has helped — morning runs through the park and long walks around the neighborhood. Red wine and chocolate in the evening hasn't hurt, either.

In what ways, if any, has your faith helped you to deal with the crisis?

While the world is changing minute-by-minute, I have found solace in the Lord's consistency. I've also discovered a newfound appreciation for his creation. Small things like the rustle of leaves in the wind or the smell of rain bring me comfort.

CORINNE KENNEDY

Memphis, Tennessee

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A business associate of ours has a family of four and had only three rolls of toilet paper left, with none to be had in her community. My sister-in-law, who works in a nearby town, had access to 80 rolls. From 300-plus miles away, my husband connected the two, who had never met each other and they made the exchange this morning. That's community supporting each other; it brings me hope and enlivens my faith in human nature and the goodness we all have inside of us.

In what ways, if any, has your faith helped you to deal with the crisis?

I pray more, and more fervently. I miss not being at Mass but am reading Lenten reflections, which keep me focused on Christ's sacrifices. Mine are miniscule in comparison.

MARY E. FREEMAN

Olean, New York

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In my neighborhood, at 6 p.m. sharp, everyone in the neighborhood comes to the curb in front of our homes and waves at everyone else. This involves about 100 people. It is fun to see our neighbors and we exchange happy greeting with one another.

DAVID WARREN

Sacramento, California

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My sisters have reached out to me by phone or e-mail and/or I have done the same for them (we are all over 60, two of us in our mid-80's). I call old friends in towns and parishes where I lived before moving to Springfield. We have long, warm phone visits. A brother-in-law took me out to grocery shop about a week ago, which has been helpful.

In house, employees bring me my meals and always have a nice smile and ask if I need anything I hadn't included on my choice list. It all helps to feel connected.

In what ways, if any, has your faith helped you to deal with the crisis?

I meditate for 30-60 minutes at the beginning of each day, recently using some thoughts from Franciscan Fr. Richard Rohr to focus, along with contemplating the trees beyond my apartment window, now beginning to green out and flower. I also pray morning and night and in between read some NCR entries in my e-mail — especially what sisters are doing globally!

CAROL J. GRIESEME

Springfield, Missouri

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Having lived in the same house for 42 years, my husband and I are so very grateful for the sense of community within our little cul-de-sac. Some neighbors have been here longer than we have. We give each other a sense of stability. The younger folk have taken an all-hands-on-deck attitude to help us. Young college-age children who grew up on the block are being called back from their studies as far away as South America. We take a secret joy in having our community together.

With that said, I cannot dismiss our financial and health worries. I used to attend daily Mass, so I miss my church community tremendously. But it is wonderful to enjoy daily walks and seeing parents play and interact with their little ones. For now, the simple joys of life far outweigh the difficulties.

In what ways, if any, has your faith helped you to deal with the crisis?

The sense of the body of Christ that I used to only feel at church is becoming evident within the communion of saints in our community.

CARMEN HARTONO

Oakland, California

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We've seen a neighbor post a sign inviting any shut-ins to call her for grocery delivery or any other help. We've sent cards to nursing home residents. Playing card games and watching funny TV shows keeps us happy!

ERIN LOTHES BIVIANO

New York, New York

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Our new neighbors left a message on our door with their phone numbers and said we could call them if we needed any help for anything.

KENNETH WILLIAM GRAHAM, JR.

Los Angeles, California

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I met a new neighbor for a second time at our local mailbox. He remembered from an earlier brief meeting that I am an older man who lives alone. He wanted to make sure that I had his name and telephone number so that I would be able to call him in case I needed anything. I was touched that this new neighbor would be so willing to go out of his way for someone he hardly knew. The same day, my neighbor across the street called and said she hadn't seen me for several days and wanted to make sure I was OK. She also offered to get me anything I needed.

EDWIN "NED" BARKER

Corvallis, Oregon

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Friends have offered to shop for us. We, initially made deliveries to others. We've had to stop that, since we are aged 79 and 85. We've received offers, through the site "Nextdoor" with offers to do shopping and dog walking. Local restaurants have sent notices for meal delivery. Fortunately, we have not needed these services. Our face-to-face medical appointments will be made by phone. We are hunkering down and obeying all the directives. I have been sending uplifting and encouraging e-cards and cheery and funny e-mails to more than 150 friends.

JEAN RAMIREZ

San Francisco, California

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I am 81 years old and often require the use of a cane when walking. The other day, I went into the supermarket. It was bright and clear immediately after sunrise when I entered. While I was inside, one of those drenching showers started outside just as I exited. I was walking slowly with my groceries when a young woman came over and told me she would help me load the groceries into the car. I refused, but she persisted. We were both drenched as she walked away thanking me for allowing her to help.

HUGH J. BURNS

Sarasota, Florida

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