



Ignatian wisdom for Covid-19

As the Covid-19 virus continues to cause chaos around the world Belgium Jesuit and author Nikolaas Sintobin SJ has been reflecting on what wisdom St Ignatius might want to share with us regarding our response to this pandemic. Read below what Nikolaas thinks the founder of his order would write in a letter from heaven which contains down-to-earth advice.

Heaven

1st March 2020, Earth time

Dear people on earth,

I see you're having a hard time finding the right attitude to the coronavirus. That's not strange. Over the past few decades, science has made such progress that you have come to believe that a solution to every problem can be found in no time. Now it's becoming clear all over the world that this is an illusion. For many of you this is quite confusing.

I myself have been struggling with chronic illness for over thirty years. As Superior General of the rapidly growing Jesuit order, I was confronted with all possible and impossible problems day in and day out for fifteen years. I would like to give you five tips through these difficult times. They are taken from my own experience.

1. At the time of this coronavirus, obey the doctors, the scientists, and the competent authorities as if it were God Himself. Even if you disagree with their decisions or do not understand them well, have the humility to accept that it is worth relying on their knowledge and experience. It will give you a clear conscience and allow you to make your contribution to the solution of the crisis.
2. Beware of fear. Fear never comes from God and does not lead to God. Fear often suggests to you all possible reasons why you should be afraid. Much of it is true. Only, you don't have to be afraid of it. The Lord takes care of you now, too. I know that from a well-informed celestial source. Experience has shown that He can write straight on the curved earthly lines. Dare to believe in them.
3. In times of crisis you do not benefit less, but more from prayer. Grant it to yourself to indulge in His love. It is the best antidote to fear.
4. In my Spiritual Exercises I wrote, "Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words." Look after one another in whatever way you safely can, especially remembering the poor and the vulnerable.
5. Finally do not forget to live and enjoy life in all this. Whatever happens, every second you are given is a unique and precious gift. There's nothing the coronavirus can do to change that.

United with you in everlasting prayer,

+ Ignatius