

# Live love now: There is no time like the present to practice our virtues



There is a tree outside where I'm coronavirus quarantining. It was only beginning to bloom when this all began. The flowers that bloomed are now brown on the ground, most of them. High winds during Holy Week definitely made a contribution, but I suppose that's about the lifespan of the blossoms.

Whatever the tree is, it reminds me a lot of the cherry blossoms in Washington, D.C., that were just about coming out when this whole new reality began for us. I mention the tree because it's a big part of my life lately – I'm noticing it morning, noon and night. It helps guide what ought to be the chief reflection of this time. It may be the Easter season, but death should be on our mind. Merely trying with all your might and face masks to escape death is not how the Christian should be approaching coronavirus – and yet, how many of us have been?

Like much of the country – much of the world – I've been in hiding. For the sake of charity, too, protecting others. But I'm not so sure I'm ready to die. How about you? And while I think I made something like a perfect act of contrition – complete with ugly tears – on Divine Mercy Sunday and every other day I could not get to confession, my lack of access to the sacrament, which really kept me moving forward during a regular week before the March that changed our lives, is certainly keeping me uneasy.

That tree, which was so beautiful in full bloom for only a few days, stands as a reminder now of the pointlessness of just

trying to wait out this time. It reminds me every day that today may be it. What are we waiting for? Even if we're spending these quarantine days trying to make improvements in our lives – to really make the habits of virtue more of how we live and breathe – why are we assuming there is plenty of time for them to settle in and become a part of who we are? Doesn't it have to happen now? Step by step, of course, but what are we waiting for? A friend of mine said to me years ago now, "Now is the time." It became a constant reminder between the two of us that there is no time to waste. The little agreed upon mutual constant *fervorino* keeps us accountable and moving forward, even when we fall.

Maybe you have something like that tree. Maybe it's your graying hair that your husband – and maybe your colleagues in your Zoom meetings – has discovered. Maybe it's the liturgical season of Lent becoming Easter and now beyond the octave. Maybe it's the increased longing you feel for the Eucharist, for doing more than praying with your laptop during Mass but being really truly present again with the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who promises us there is nothing to fear about death if we follow him.

So, is there joy in the face of all these things? Are we prompted to let the Lord know we are ready for loving service, whatever it looks like in these odd times? We need to be prudent, but we also need to ask ourselves often: Could anyone tell that we are Christians beyond us commenting on a Mass on Facebook live (which is something I've not quite gotten used to, either)? We always need to be Easter people, but wouldn't that sure be some balm in the midst of all this anxiety now?

I pray the most amazing things happen in families now, gathered around livestreamed Masses as they may be. There are families, too, who are struggling in terrifying ways we might not come to know about until so much pain has been inflicted. But if we are praying for all that is hidden now, what miracles should we be confident God will work! This time is

for the work of our lifetimes, because now is the time, and tomorrow may not be. Isn't that the constant reminder? Isn't that the lesson? Live love now – always – no pause or delay.

*Kathryn Jean Lopez is a senior fellow at the National Review Institute and editor-at-large of National Review.*