

## Leadership in the Face of Difficulty

*Rise & Shine, April 12<sup>th</sup>*

### **Matthew 21:5**

*Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

### **Questions:**

1. How can people be given encouragement and strength to face a long-term crisis such as the coronavirus pandemic? What spiritual resources can be used?
  2. What lay and clergy leadership is being offered in your church during this crisis? What else could be done?
  3. What would it mean for leaders today to imitate Christ's humility and look first to the interests of others? How can they practice servant leadership in the face of the coronavirus threat?
  4. How can you be a leader in your family, neighborhood, church or community during this coronavirus pandemic? What kind of leadership will you offer today?
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*In the News*

### **Leaders Rise to the Challenge of COVID-19**

"One odd side effect of COVID-19 has been what it does to taste," reports *The Washington Post*. "Even those who have avoided the illness enjoy things they once disliked: government spending. Facetiming with family. Andrew M. Cuomo."

Although Cuomo had a reputation for being a micromanager and a bully, the Democratic governor of New York has been earning praise in the news media for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Cuomo offers morning news conferences that begin with facts: reports on the growth of cases from zero to 30,000 to 45,000 in New York state alone. "That's a problem," he says, along with the fact that they are running out of beds and ventilators. Then he tells moving stories about New York, his family, and the wider population. He acknowledges that the density of urban New York -- its "closeness," in his words -- is what makes it vulnerable, but is also what will help it to survive.

The Cuomo news conferences have been described as "part briefing, part sermon, part inspirational talk."

On the Republican side of the aisle, Gov. Larry Hogan of Maryland has been applauded in the media for his leadership during this crisis. Early on, he delegated day-to-day governing authority to his lieutenant governor so that he could focus full time on the pandemic. "I think this has been a time where governors really have led," said Hogan to *CBS News*, "We've been on the front lines, and we've stepped up to make those tough decisions, governors on both sides of the aisle, but also to push for more action from the federal level." Hogan is a popular Republican in a predominantly Democratic state, and he also chairs the National Governors Association.

On *Fox News* last Sunday, Hogan said "We don't want people to be scared, but we do want them to take it seriously and want, you know, the facts to be out there. So we're going to follow the doctors and the scientists." Hogan's comments were made as Maryland experienced a sharp rise in the number of people infected by the coronavirus, including 66 residents in one nursing home. On Monday, he put Maryland under a stay-at-home directive as coronavirus cases surpassed 1,400.

Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, whose latest book is *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, tells *CBS News* that there is precedent for governors taking the lead in a time of crisis. "When I think about FDR and the situation in the Depression before he became president -- he's the governor of New York, and New York state was overwhelmed by the Depression -- so he started taking action on his own. [Roosevelt was] the first person in the nation, as a governor, to mobilize a comprehensive relief program." Throughout the country, many governors and local officials have led during this time. Responses have differed from place to place, often tailored to local conditions, but each has now been placed in a position where their leadership has immediate meaning.

In an article on "Leadership in the Time of the Coronavirus," Steve Denning reports on efforts to "bend the curve" through social distancing. He quotes Michael Osterholm, Director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, who warns that this approach will not defeat the disease. "The virus is likely to be here until we have a vaccine," Osterholm said. "When we are 'bending the curve,' all we are doing is postponing those cases; we are not eliminating them. The challenge is how

many cases we can suppress or prevent until we get a vaccine. I hear talk of being in this until April or August, but I think we are going to be in this for many, many months."

On March 29, President Trump announced that federal social-distancing guidelines would be extended to April 30 in an effort to curb the coronavirus outbreak. The initial 15-day period of social distancing urged by the federal government was set to expire on Monday, March 30. But "nothing would be worse than declaring victory before the victory is won," Trump said outside the White House, in a briefing reported by the *New York Post*. As of March 29, the United States has more than 130,000 cases of COVID-19 and at least 2,300 deaths -- and the death toll is expected to peak around Easter, April 12. Trump had previously aimed to reopen the country on Easter, but said Sunday that was "just an aspiration."

With regard to mitigation methods designed to decrease the number of infections and deaths, Trump said, "I want the American people to know that your selfless, inspiring and valiant efforts are saving countless lives. You are making the difference."

More on this story can be found at these links:

[Andrew Cuomo During the COVID-19 Crisis Is the Same as Ever, With One Big Difference: People Like Him. \*The Washington Post\*](#)

[Trump Extends Coronavirus Social-Distancing Guidelines to April 30. \*New York Post\*](#)  
[Leadership in Times of Crisis. \*CBS News\*](#)

[Maryland Gov. Hogan Says He's Listening to Scientists, Not Trump, When it Comes to Coronavirus. \*Fox News\*](#)

[Leadership in the Time of the Coronavirus. \*Forbes\*](#)

[WHO Chief Praises Trump's Coronavirus 'Leadership.' \*New York Post\*](#)

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### **Proverbs 27:23-24**

*Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds; for riches do not last forever, nor a crown for all generations*

### **Philippians 2:3-4**

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.*

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### **Prayer for a Pandemic**

May we who are merely inconvenienced

Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors

Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home

Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips

Remember those that have no place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market

Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,

Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.

Amen.