DAILY MEDITATION: ECCLESIASTES 3:1-11

What a challenging year we've had!

The corona virus has turned our lives upside down. What we used to take for granted—that schools and businesses would be open, that we could go wherever we want whenever we want to—we suddenly can't assume any more. Hugging or shaking hands has been replaced with a simple nod of the head from a safe distance. It's been a time of social distancing from friends but drawing closer to the people with whom we are sheltering in place.

Isn't it remarkable how appropriate this reading from Ecclesiastes is for this particular moment in history? It describes the common ups and downs of life, but it takes on a special resonance this past year. This has been a time of fear and suffering for those sickened by the virus, a time of mourning when loved ones have died, and a time of gratitude for those who remain healthy.

Yet as Christians, we know that Jesus is still in charge of the situation. He has "made everything appropriate to its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). He is with us in this pandemic, just as he has been with us in all our other trials. And because he is with us, he continues to pour out his blessings, even amid the challenges. He gives us the grace to deal with the obstacles we face. He

invites us to unite our sufferings to his on the cross. And he holds out the promise of new life, both now and forever.

Today, acknowledge what you have been though these last few months—the ups and downs, the moments of joy and the moments of sorrow. Allow Christ to enter into each of these areas. He won't judge you for feeling discouraged or frightened or alone. He understands the discomfort and distress of having your life disrupted in so many ways. Let him accompany you day by day through this "appointed time" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). He longs to heal you and unite himself to you. Know that even when embracing is difficult, you can always rest in his embrace.

"Lord, thank you for being my stronghold during life's ups and downs."

Psalm 144:1-4
Luke 9:18-22