

## DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND COVID

We often do not understand the ways of God in the wisdom of Divine Providence. Our understanding of God may be too small. And small wonder, how could we grasp the ways of an infinite God. Perhaps we could approach Divine Providence more easily if we think a bit about Divine Creation. On first glance it would appear that Creation is impossible. If God is everything, that is, if God is infinite being, then it would seem there is no room for anything else. In creating us God made room for us somehow. God did not create us out of himself. We are not part of God. God created us out of nothing, but we are never apart from God. Similarly, God is not only infinite being as creator but also infinite doing as provider of the world of action. God is doing everything that is done, and yet we are doing something. How is that possible? Who can understand an infinite God who made room for our creation and made room for our freedom.

Perhaps another approach to Divine Providence might be tried. When we die we know most of us are not bad enough to be separated from God and not quite good enough to not need a bit of polish before coming into the presence of God. I suspect when we die we will see the truth of our life — the whole truth and nothing but the truth. We will see the good we have done and the good we failed to do. That will distress us. We will see the bad we have done and the bad we failed to do. That will console us. We will see all the extenuating circumstances from our birth, our family, our education, our health, our circumstances of every kind, known and unknown. In the end there will be some remorse and some regrets and we will not be able to be eternally happy with such regrets, unless God's providence is shown us, and we see how God brought about his goodness

in this world through and despite our mistakes and our sins. We will understand from the inside the working of Divine Providence in the world and in our lives.

So what about COVID. We are puzzled. What is God in his providence up to? We do not see the value of human suffering. We never have. God gives us no explanation for the suffering of the innocent, especially the suffering of children. There is no adequate theory, but God came to us as a human being and said this: I will not explain suffering and Divine Providence, but I will walk through suffering with you. I will be born in a stable and die on a cross. I will know suffering as you do, and I will ask you to trust God as I do. "My God, why have you abandoned me" is followed by "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

That said, how might we puzzle out the hope that Covid is within Divine Providence and someday we will understand what God is bringing about. I think of the experience of putting together a jig-saw puzzle. Many pieces. No extra pieces and no missing pieces. All pieces fit in, but the pieces in the center cannot be fit in until the pieces all around them are fitted in. We have the COVID piece in our hand. It does not seem to fit in and we despair it will ever fit in. But, in God's Divine Providence there are no extra pieces and no missing pieces. We are asked simply to trust in Divine Providence. God made us to know him, to love him, and to serve him in this life and to be happy with him forever in the next. Our God may be too small in our imagination. The infinite God is not just more and more zeroes. The infinite made room for us to exist and makes room for us to flourish forever within eternal life with God.

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