

# Give problems to Christ within us

Recently I saw a quote from Gerald Jampolsky: “This moment is the only moment there is, and it is for love. In this moment there is no guilt or fear.”

All the saints and mystics tell us to live in the present moment. As St. Paul said, “Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation.”

Yet, while I believe and preach that, I find it so hard to always do it. I get caught up in “looking back” or “looking forward.”

It’s easy to miss the now looking at “then” or “when.”

Recently a psychiatrist explained to me that they have discovered that many of the antidepressant drugs also have an anti-anxiety component. He said that they are both lines on a continuum. Depression says: “Something awful has happened.” Anxiety says: “Something awful might happen.” Both have “awful” as part of the thought process.

Other than drug therapy or talk therapy, what else helps with anxiety and depression? At least two things help – meditation and prayer. Prayer has been defined as us talking to God. Meditation has been defined as us allowing God to talk to us. Meditations come in many forms. Many are the “thought for the day” kind. A single sentence. A few paragraphs. A time just to still our minds, or allow other thoughts to penetrate our minds other than depressing or anxious thoughts.

One of my favorite short meditations comes from the Hazelden Series. Here is a short meditation on Spring: “In the Spring, when lilacs bloom, it’s easy to believe that this moment is for love. In the Spring, when the earth is reborn, when dandelions are everywhere and birds build nests, and the ground is warm, and our bodies relax, and we sit in the sun and sigh, we let winter’s tension melt away and remember once again what it feels like to let go. Our faith returns in the Spring. We feel our connection to all living things. In the Spring, it’s easier to notice the breeze and the green and the blue. And when we notice, we live in the moment. When we notice, we can believe with our mind and body that the world is for love.” If we are to believe the Book of Genesis and the Garden of Eden, then it’s fair to say that our

natural state is one of joy and peace and bliss. Our natural state is to be one with God.

When we separate from God, when we leave the garden, when we identify with the world, we are pulled into anxiety and depression. The world, with its cares and worries and disasters, pulls us down. To come into the now is to come again into the presence of God. Meditation brings us into the now. So does good prayer.

Allow me to share two short, favorite prayers. The first is from St. Theresa of Avila: "Let nothing trouble you. Let nothing frighten you. All is fleeting. God alone is unchanging. Patience obtains everything. Who possesses God wants nothing, for God alone suffices. Amen."

In times of prayer that prayer helps me. However, when I can't get my email to send this article to The Catholic Review, or when my computer commands me, instead of me commanding it (a fairly frequent situation) I confess that I fall into the world of anxiety and depression. I find it comforting to notice that St. Paul, despite beautiful writings on love and joy, also showed anxiety and depression.

It's nice to know that even the great saints could not maintain a state of peace.

A second short, meditative prayer is something given to me in very recent days. It goes simply: "I give this to the Christ within, and I am free." Whatever the "this" might be - worry, fear, grief, anxiety, job problems, health issues, etc, - give it to the Christ within us. St. Paul could not always maintain a euphoric state, but he did know where the source of joy and peace was: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives within me."

None of us can handle all that life throws at us. But God can. There are many causes for anxiety and depression - some biological, some things deeply rooted in our unconscious minds, some years of practice of reacting in certain ways. There is no simply cure for all that ails us. Drugs can help sometimes. Talk can help. Prayer and meditation can help. They can all be sources of remembering the Divine Presence within us. When we are in joy and peace we are in our natural state intended by God. All of us can fall out of that state. It's always okay to go back. We can all give whatever bothers us to the Christ within us. Then we are free!