

Living forward, understanding backwards: Quelling life's fears and worries



Sunset from our home on Singer Island on August 5 (Photo by Patti Murphy Dohn)

"Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.

Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

-St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4: 6-7

Summertime is usually a season when people focus on warm weather, beach vacations, and a much slower pace.

You know... Those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer that Nat King Cole sang about in the 60's.

But times are often not that easy for some families.

Earlier this summer, I was writing upbeat, fun reflections on summertime from our home in South Florida.

As George Gershwin wrote, "Summertime and the livin' is easy..."

As I always say, Life, as we know it, can change in an instant...

In the middle of our summer, it changed. Stories of families and individuals with devastating troubles were all around me.

And I wrote several times about the enormous worry when Austin and Perry, the 14-year old boys from Tequesta, Florida, went out of the Jupiter, Florida Inlet on a small

boat and became lost at sea. This happened just twelve miles north of our home on Singer Island in Palm Beach County.

I joined forces via social media with their families and friends down here in South Florida to get prayers and info out about their plight and possible safe return. For these families, it's now been 14 days missing at sea, with the Coast Guard having ended their search last weekend.

And, frankly, I fear these families may never have closure as to what happened (and why) to their sons.

Read more about my reflections and prayers for the boys here:

Part 1:

"Prayers for Austin and Perry: Two young sons missing at sea"

Part 2:

"More Prayers for Austin and Perry: The power of hope and prayer"

Living forward, understanding backwards:

When things get tough, it is easy to become consumed with worry... And to be overcome by the fear.

For as we know, tragedy and heartache can and do hit without warning.

Serious illness, death, heartbreak, family disharmony, and so much more...

The worries of life could consume us.

God works in mysterious ways and we often don't see the beauty of His Providence until later after a crisis passes by.

Kierkegaard was right when he said,

"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."

We usually do not realize the hand of God guiding us through tough times until after we get through the worst. Reflecting back, we are better able to see "the good" that has come out of a bad situation.

The famous "Footprints" prayer comes to mind.

So today I'm praying for all those who are experiencing tough times.

Praying that they will trust in God's Providence and that their worry and fear will be replaced with peace and hope.

A prayer for when you're worried:

Popular family blogger Rachel Wojnarowski shared a beautiful prayer on her website recently for those who are worried.

Dear God,

My mind can hardly fathom the depth of your love for me.

*So when my anxious heart feels suffocated
with the mounds of worry this life can bring,*

I only know to come to you.

You who know every hair on my head.

You who flung stars into space.

You who plan every step I take.

*When my worry mounds and builds,
escalating to numbers that exceed my expectations,*

You ask me to relinquish my cares to Your hand.

The hand that created the hair on my head.

The hand that created the starry night sky.

The hand that holds my future.

Would you give me the courage to trust You wholly?

Would you give me Your peace that calms all fears?

For that is when I am rejuvenated...

From pitiful worrier...

To prayer warrior.

Thank you, Jesus.

Amen.

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***May you rest in the assurance of God's loving presence during your times of
worry.***

In good times and in bad, God is good... All the time. Amen.