

August 29, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Saint Anastasia,

A number of people have thanked me for my suggestion last week which resulted in many positive messages being exchanged among our parishioners. Keep it up! It's working! Today I'd like to propose another assignment, if you can call it that, that's a little harder and more demanding but it doesn't entail any physical exertion at all. This one takes place in the head, and comes from the heart.

I don't need to tell you that emotions are running high and nerves are frayed out there. We've all seen it from one side or the other. Melt downs are becoming a part of everyday life. How do we navigate these tricky waters and remain afloat with the least possible damage to our psyches? How do we keep our heads above water when everybody around us is sinking?

There are numerous coping mechanisms within our reach but I'd like to focus on just two that have been a great help to me. The first is concentrating on thinking, acting and speaking **positively**. If you can get used to doing this, everything looks better. The easiest way to start is to eliminate one word from your vocabulary – that word is *but*. "It's a beautiful day, *but* tonight it's supposed to really rain." "That's a pretty white dress *but* I'll bet it gets dirty pretty fast." The facts are that the day is beautiful and the dress is pretty. That's enough. It's good news. Cross out the *buts*. Of course there are down sides to everything, but look at the plusses and cut out the *buts*. There's just too much negative noise out there. Be positive.

The second thing we can all do demands a little more discipline. It harkens back to something we were taught from childhood. If you don't have anything good to say, **keep your mouth shut**. If you don't have anything encouraging to say, if you don't have anything enlightening to say, if you don't have anything positive to say, *keep your mouth shut*. It's not necessary to weigh in on every issue, especially in those areas where you don't know a thing! (For most of us, that covers a broad range of topics!) If what you are going to say won't make things better, *keep your mouth shut*. There are enough experts out there. Give yourself a break – stay out of it.

As we go through life we need to remind ourselves that God always has us pretty much right where He wants us. Like it or not, we are all in the midst of this pandemic together. May we all pray for the grace to accept what's before us and to be guided by God to do His will in all things. One of the best ways we can do this is to remain positive and encouraging, to be beacons of hope and gentility – to be kind to ourselves and one another. Let us continue to pray for each other, to help each other and remember that together we can do this!

Sincerely yours,  
Fr. Colagreco