

1 Peter 5:1-11

¹Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you ²to attend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it – not for sordid things but eagerly. ³Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. ⁴And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. ⁵In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁶Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.



Discuss

Peter is one of the first followers of Jesus (see Luke 5:1-11) and one of the first people to recognize him as God (see Matthew 16:13-20). In this letter, he's encouraging those who feel separated from friends and experiencing suffering and persecution. He wants them to journey with courage towards Jesus, all which requires the true grace of God. In his own faith journey, Peter moved from faith in Jesus as a good teacher, to disillusionment, to recognizing Jesus as the one who leads him and saves him.

1) In verses 1 to 4, Peter writes to the elders of early Christian communities who are learning to lead in difficult circumstances. He points them to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd. What are some of the characteristics of "shepherds" Peter invites the elders to become?

2) Humility is learning to see ourselves as we truly are. In times of trouble and suffering we can be tempted to see untrue versions of ourselves. What are you tempted to see of yourself that is untrue? (Hint: our anxieties give us clues about what we believe about ourselves, about God, and about our situations.) How might "casting your anxiety on him" help you in growing humility?

Apply

1) Name what is making you anxious and pray for each other, giving that anxiety to Jesus.

2) Where are you called to lead like Jesus – with humility, compassion, and care for others? Make a network map of your relationships that have shifted since the disruption and displacement of the virus. Ask the Holy Spirit who you should reach out to. When you connect with those people, listen to their anxieties, ask them if you can pray for them, and practice "casting their anxieties" on Jesus. If there is an appropriate action to take in caring for those in your network, do it.