



## Part 2

Another not really new thought; <https://www.wevideo.com/view/1703877234>

Let me expand on that word – love – a bit.

The church, like the whole world, has also been reminded by our experience of social distancing that human life can only be fully human when lived in solidarity and community with others. Concern for the needs of others, especially for those unable to fend well for themselves in this time of crisis, is rising everywhere. There is now a realization not only of community but also of how important community is for our formation as human persons, for our transformation into a likeness of Christ. The people of faith need each other to be people of witness.

Further there is a realization that social interaction and action is how communities themselves are formed and reformed. And in that the church's social part in its mission becomes more evident and more dramatic during times of crisis. These crises can remind us that we are created as equals as we get a glimpse of some of the challenges and uncertainties millions of people face every day.

When it recedes, what can the church do to help us as society to learn from these experiences? Are we going to remember, are we being transformed by this experience?

Consider this. Many of us are experiencing a pandemic for the first time, yet others have known the ravages of malaria, tuberculosis, maternal and infant mortality, AIDS, Ebola, war — the list goes on. Likewise, many know that treatments and solution are there, but not within their reach, not within their strength.

We have kept those illnesses from our doorsteps for years, but not from theirs. Unaffected, we could live with the televised news of their struggles and often we benefited even if only indirectly. Can we now? Now that we know the debilitating consequences of a pandemic and the tangible anxiety of lacking available resources, can we return to our old ways of living with news of their struggles?

Now it is not only the Good News of Christ who calls us to act in solidarity, it is now the governments of the world, although out of self-interest. And consequently, then our responses will differ, depending to whom we listen. Are we listening to the Good News of Christ, which is void of self-interest, or will we be more like the people in the book *The Plaque*.

For now it should be obvious that the common good requires us to constrain our desires and our freedoms when they emotionally and directly hurt others, and so we keep our distance, stay at home. But that is going to change, are we ready for it?

It is time we open ourselves to a world beyond our own shores and egos.

As the International Monetary Fund said March 28, we are in a recession and we risk a financial crisis graver than the Great Depression. It will be part of the social aspect of the Good News and therefore of the people of God that illuminates a path towards not to a more resilient post-pandemic financial world but towards a world that reflects better some aspects of the values of the Kingdom of God.

And so the perhaps most important question we will be faced with: When that joyful day returns on which we can fully participate in the community life with brothers and sisters, will we carry with us from this moment only the mechanics of new pathways of communication and ministry, or also the deeper mandate that we as the people of God must become once again piercingly outward facing while loving all?

Your friend Manfred