

Dr. Hasmig Jinivizian

The Valley Hospital

Ridgewood, NJ

It has been almost 3 months since our world was stunned by COVID-19. Life as we knew it has changed in many ways. I offer heartfelt condolences for those of you who have lost loved ones in this horrible pandemic. For those of you who maintained social distancing, challenging though it was, I am grateful.

By the time the news reported the first few COVID-19 patients, the virus was already silently spreading in our community. Like a tidal wave, the ill patients began flooding in. Within weeks the hospital was filled almost entirely with COVID-19 patients. We were told that our personal protective equipment (PPE) was running low. We made do with what we had, not sure if it was enough to protect ourselves. I did not kiss my family or see my parents for months. We did our best with available treatments, watching many patients suffer. I held many hands of people suffering alone without family, and those dying, ready to join God. I would silently pray for every one.

Now as the tide has ebbed, we are left with the aftermath of this disease. Although the future is uncertain, we have been through a tremendous amount and have learned invaluable lessons. There are more treatments available now. These treatments seem to be working better. More and more is learned each day. We can look ahead with more confidence and thank God for getting us here.

Dr. Hrach Ike Kasaryan

Holy Name Medical Center

Teaneck, NJ

When Covid 19 invaded our lives I felt helpless, scared, weak and anxious. Like a tsunami engulfing everything in its wake, Covid was infecting everyone around me. Patients, staff, colleagues and friends all falling ill left and right. The hospital was full of Covid infected patients with more and more coming through the ER and even scores more home and sick. Being a husband and father of three, I was scared to bring the virus home. Even worse, contracting the virus and dying, leaving my family alone. It was looking very bleak and I was beginning to lose hope.

So I did what most people do in bad situations. I looked for some sort of control. I looked for research and data to reassure me that we had a handle on it. It didn't exist. I looked for leadership to guide us through it. It didn't exist. I tried to look for some thing that would give me control. It didn't exist. However, at my most vulnerable moments, I realized there is only one way to get through this and that was to put my trust in Christ. Through support from my wife, children, family and friends I slowly felt the Holy Spirit guiding me through this pandemic. A spiritual role model of mine suggested I read Psalm 91. It became both my prayer and my mantra. "He is my refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust". I repeated this over and over

through out my day. When I was scared walking into a Covid isolation room, "He is my refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust." When I would receive the positive test result of a patient that I had recently seen in the office "He is my refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust". Over and over as I encountered difficult situations I would just recite this psalm.

A turning point for me was when my 8 year old daughter seeing me scared wrote me a note that said "*Baba your gowing to be fine just never panic thats how you will be safe you are gods child he and I will petect you.*" Her words felt inspiring and resonated within me. I felt like Christ was speaking to me through her words. After that day I carried the note in my pocket as a reminder to keep my trust in Christ and that he would give me strength.

Covid 19 has been surreal. The sickness, suffering and death that families have endured has been horrible. But, at the same time, I now understand why the theme of "joy in suffering" is repeated over and over in the gospels and the new testament. Because, through suffering we realize we can not do it on our own strength and abilities, but that we need Christ there to carry us. Therefore, "He is my refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust".