

Notes From:
**Hebrews Plugged-In: An Hour of Prayer and Self-Care for Catechetical Leaders/
Youth Ministers**
April 2, 2020 via Zoom.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit by Cardinal Mercier

I am going to reveal to you the secret of sanctity and happiness. Every day for five minutes control your imagination and close your eyes to all the noises of the world in order to enter into yourself. Then, in the sanctuary of your baptized soul (which is the temple of the Holy Spirit) speak to that Divine Spirit, saying to Him:

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore You.

Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me.

Tell me what I should do; give me Your orders.

**I promise to submit myself to all that You desire of me
and**

to accept all that You permit to happen to me.

Let me only know Your Will.

If you do this, your life will flow along happily, serenely, and full of consolation, even in the midst of trials. Grace will be proportioned to the trial, giving you the strength to carry it and you will arrive at the Gate of Paradise, laden with merit. This submission to the Holy Spirit is the secret of sanctity.

Beginning Prayer

Prayer to Our Lady, Undoer of Knots

“Dearest Holy Mother, Most Holy Mary, you undo the knots that suffocate your children, extend your merciful hands to me. I entrust to You today this knot...and all the negative consequences that it provokes in my life.

I give you this knot that torments me and makes me unhappy and so impedes me from uniting myself to You and Your Son Jesus, my Savior.

I run to You, Mary, Undoer of Knots because I trust you and I know that you never despise a sinning child who comes to ask you for help. I believe that you can undo this knot because Jesus grants you everything. I believe that you want to undo this knot because you are my Mother. I believe that You will do this because you love me with eternal love”

Present Moment Concerns in the World

- Uncertainty amid this pandemic (health of ourselves, loved ones, jobs, economy, how long it will last, are things going to get worse, etc.)
- Uncertainty in the Church (limited or no access to the Sacraments, etc.)
- Our daily uncertainties and concerns that were present before the pandemic began and have now become magnified

Biblical Guidance for Times of Uncertainty

“...Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned, nor will flames consume you” –Isaiah 43:1-2

“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” –Philippians 4:6-7

Noah’s Ark Meditation

“Let’s begin by closing our eyes and taking a few deep breaths: breathing in for three seconds, holding the air in our lungs for three seconds, and breathing out for three seconds. Do this for the next thirty seconds, taking notice of any emotions popping up into our awareness.

Maybe they’re thoughts of uncertainty, anxiety or fear. Just let them be there, coming and going in their own good time. Continuing to breath in and out as before.

I want to bring to our awareness the story of Noah’s Ark. God was to send a great flood, one that would wipe out the peoples of the Earth. Having granted Noah foresight and divine guidance, he was able to craft a vessel we know today as Noah’s Ark.

Noah knew a storm was coming: he may not have known how hard the rain was going to fall and how much the waves would throw his boat around—but he did know that God was always with him and would protect him, his family, and the animals present on the ark. He trusted unwaveringly in God.

Noah's Ark is a lot like us in our present time. In this scenario, the ark is us as we are: the person listening to this meditation. The rain and storms are our thoughts and emotions: the anxiety or fear we feel inside, or the uncertainty we're experiencing in our lives due to the current pandemic.

While the storm will rage, and we feel like we're going to be capsized and drown, we can take knowledge in the fact that God's grace will always see us through any obstacle, no matter how impossible to conquer it appears to be in that moment.

Take heart in the knowledge that you're the boat, an unsinkable object that is and will continue to be before, during, and after the storms and rains. Just as it was in the Bible, we, as the ark, will make it through the storms and safely settle on dry land.

We know that the weather will continue to change, and we'll have wanted and unwanted thoughts and emotions throughout this time of uncertainty, but we also know we're the ark, and we can make it through any storm with the grace of God. Take a moment to place your concerns and cares before God and ask for His grace in facing them.

I invite you now to return your focus to your breath, noticing your chest rising and falling with each inhale and exhale. And when you're ready, open your eyes and come back to the room you're in presently."

Thoughts to Leave You With

- Supporting Yourself
 - Practice identifying which worry is "actual worry" and "hypothetical worry" to help yourself keep your worry in perspective
 - Take a break from watching, reading, or listening to news stories and social media
 - Take care of your body: take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Take time for prayer and attend Mass at home. Receive Spiritual Communion daily. Eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise, get plenty of sleep
 - Take care of your mind: Maintain a schedule that mirrors your pre-pandemic schedule to keep yourself in a comfortable routine: go to bed and wake up at the same time, get ready for the day, get dressed even if you're staying home for the day or working from home
 - Take time for self-care: Try to do some activities you enjoy that you may not always have time for because of your busy schedule
 - Connect with others: Call friends or family and see how they're doing; share how you're doing also. Call, video chat or text a friend or family member you haven't been able to connect with lately because of your busy schedule

Most importantly, make this a time of spiritual renewal for you. Let this pandemic change you for the better. Learn more about your faith. Grow in faith, prayer, love of neighbor and trust in God.

Below is a link to the recorded Zoom meeting event during which this talk was presented. The recording begins with Thomas' presentation already in progress, and his presentation ends at 13:05 of the recording.



Thomas Pfister is a Mental Health Therapist at Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Green Bay (Menasha). His e-mail address is tpfister@gbdioc.org.



PRAYER IN TIMES OF CRISIS

...Like COVID-19

For a recording of this presentation, click below. It begins at 15:31 and ends at 33:41.

[CLICK HERE](#)

“

The storm exposes our **vulnerability** and uncovers those **false and superfluous certainties** around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed **to become dull and feeble** the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our **prepackaged ideas and forgetfulness** of what nourishes our people's souls; all those attempts that **anesthetize us** with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly “save” us.

(Pope Francis, *Urbi et Orbi*, March 27, 2020)



1. HOW TO PRAY

Perhaps the hardest part of prayer, is figuring out how to begin. This might be the most time we've had to pray in a long time...

WHAT IS PRAYER?

“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.”

~St. Therese of Lisieux

“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.”

~Catechism 2559 and St. John Damascene

Prayer is:

- 1) God’s gift**
- 2) Covenant**
- 3) Communion**

A photograph of three women in a social setting, possibly a church or community event. The woman in the foreground is seen from the side, wearing a dark, textured sweater. Behind her, two other women are visible, one wearing a black hat and glasses, and another with glasses. The scene is lit with warm, golden light. A dark diagonal overlay covers the left side of the image, containing white text.

“The glory of
God is man
fully alive”

~St. Irenaeus

It's easy to think of prayer...

- As standardized, memorized prayers;
- As rigid in structure and protected by walls of tradition;
- Something only priests and religious are trained in;
- But the saints and the Catechism have taught us another way.

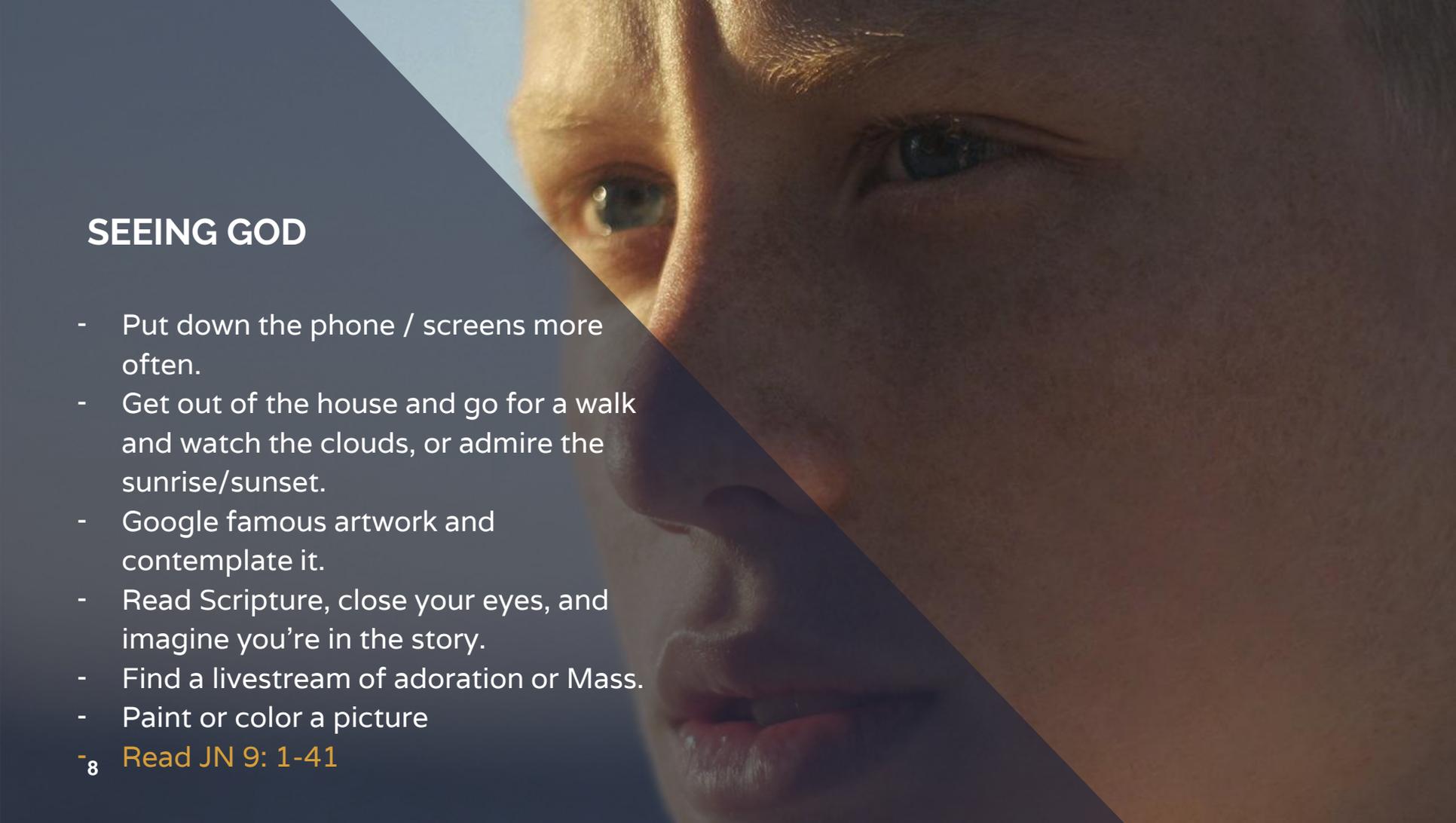
By being human, by simply thinking of God, by the act of crying out in joy or pain, we are praying!



A dramatic landscape featuring a vibrant rainbow arching over dark, silhouetted hills. The sky is a deep, stormy blue with scattered white clouds, suggesting a recent or ongoing storm. The overall mood is one of hope and resilience amidst adversity.

2. SURGE OF THE HEART

God is not quarantined during this time.
How can we pray when it seems like we
are in the midst of the storm?

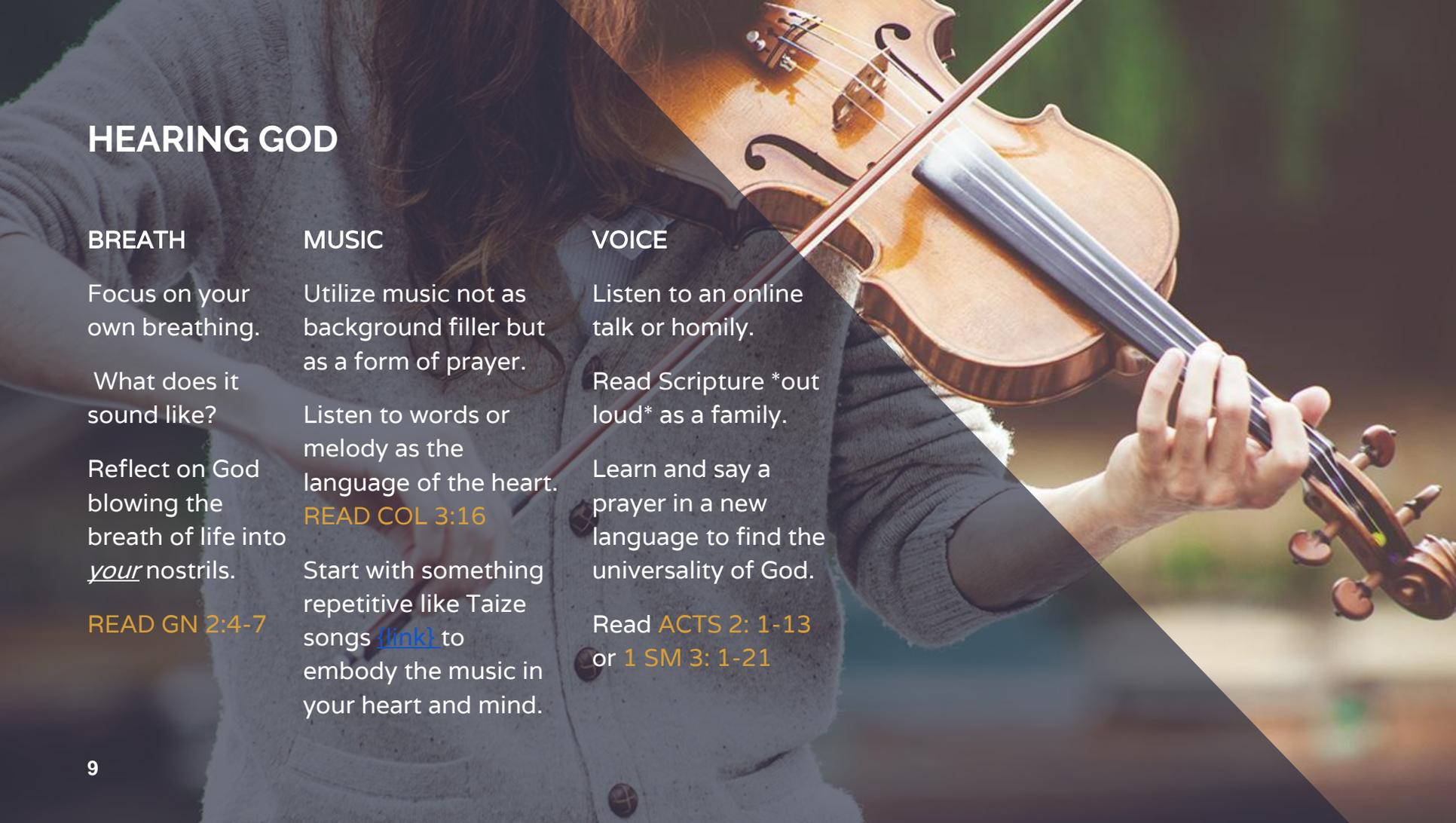


SEEING GOD

- Put down the phone / screens more often.
- Get out of the house and go for a walk and watch the clouds, or admire the sunrise/sunset.
- Google famous artwork and contemplate it.
- Read Scripture, close your eyes, and imagine you're in the story.
- Find a livestream of adoration or Mass.
- Paint or color a picture

-8 **Read JN 9: 1-41**

HEARING GOD



BREATH

Focus on your own breathing.

What does it sound like?

Reflect on God blowing the breath of life into your nostrils.

READ GN 2:4-7

MUSIC

Utilize music not as background filler but as a form of prayer.

Listen to words or melody as the language of the heart.

READ COL 3:16

Start with something repetitive like Taize songs [\[link\]](#) to embody the music in your heart and mind.

VOICE

Listen to an online talk or homily.

Read Scripture *out loud* as a family.

Learn and say a prayer in a new language to find the universality of God.

Read ACTS 2: 1-13 or 1 SM 3: 1-21

“

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and choosing from every clean animal and every clean bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar. **When the Lord smelled the sweet odor**, the Lord said to himself: Never again will I curse the ground because of human beings, since the desires of the human heart are evil from youth; nor will I ever again strike down every living being, as I have done.

Genesis 8: 20-21

SMELLING GOD!?!?

BAKE / COOK

Food is central to the human experience. Scripture talks a lot about food. [\[link\]](#)

Spend some time creating in the kitchen. Smell what your creation has brought about.

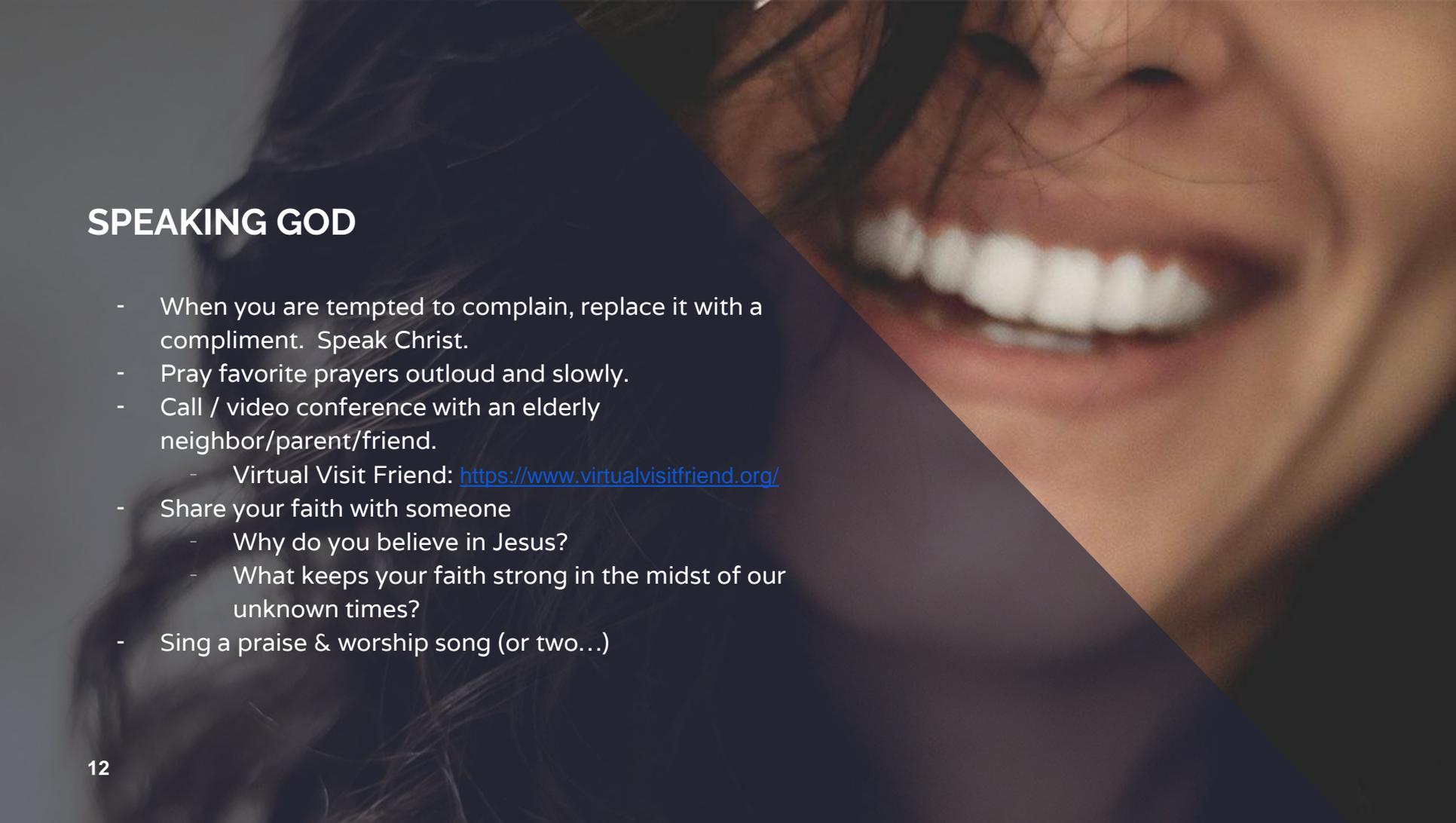
Contemplate the nourishment that food gives us and remember that we cannot live on bread alone.

INCENSE

Burnt offerings have long been a tradition for believing people (remember Noah).

Burn some incense (or maybe a candle). Imagine the smoke that wafts upwards as your prayer.

READ JN 12:1-8. The fragrance filled the house as a metaphor for Christ filling the house with His fragrance.



SPEAKING GOD

- When you are tempted to complain, replace it with a compliment. Speak Christ.
- Pray favorite prayers outloud and slowly.
- Call / video conference with an elderly neighbor/parent/friend.
 - Virtual Visit Friend: <https://www.virtualvisitfriend.org/>
- Share your faith with someone
 - Why do you believe in Jesus?
 - What keeps your faith strong in the midst of our unknown times?
- Sing a praise & worship song (or two...)

CLOSING PRAYER

*Merciful Father,
May we who are merely inconvenienced
remember those whose lives are at stake.
May we who have no risk factors
remember those most vulnerable.
May we who have the luxury of working
from home
remember those who must choose
between preserving their health or
making their rent.
May we who have the flexibility to care for
our children when their schools close
remember those who have no options.*

CLOSING PRAYER

*May we who have to cancel our trips
remember those that have no place to go.
May we who are losing our margin money in
the tumult of the economic market
remember those who have no margin at all.
May we who settle in for a quarantine at home
remember those who have no home.
During this time when we cannot physically
wrap our arms around each other,
Let us yet find ways to be the loving
embrace of God to our neighbors.
We ask this through Christ the Healer. Amen.*