

A DEVOTIONAL FOR THE **ELECTION SEASON**

By Father Santiago Rodriguez

Devotional Three: Managing News-Related Stress

Be still, and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10

Many of us today experience stress from constant news exposure, especially through social media, often without realizing its impact on their mental health. The presidential election news cycle adds to that toll on our mental health. Studies link heavy news consumption to increased depression, anxiety, and stress. The relentless stream of negative or dramatic news can erode resilience and reduce our ability to cope with daily challenges.

POUR OUT YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD

We are called to embrace the peace of Christ. To engage with news more mindfully and reduce anxiety, we can incorporate some of the following practices:

Set Intentions Before Reading or Watching the News: Before diving into news updates, take a moment to clarify your purpose. Are you seeking information, or just passing time? This awareness helps guide more intentional consumption.

Limit News Intake: Establish specific times during the day to check the news, rather than constantly scrolling or visiting news websites. This creates boundaries and reduces the feeling of being overwhelmed.

Seeking Solitude and Prayer: Jesus often withdrew to quiet places to pray and reflect. We can create intentional quiet moments to step back from the noise of the world, including the constant flow of news. These moments allow us to reconnect with God and approach the world with a calm and centered heart.

Mindful Breathing: Practice deep breathing exercises before and after reading the news to ground yourself. This helps manage emotional responses and keeps anxiety at bay.

Curate Your News Sources: Pay attention to the social media and news outlets where you are consuming news. Making a list of them can help you be attentive to the type of information you are getting. This reduces exposure to anxiety-inducing content.

JOURNALING PROMPT

“Today, as I reflect on the news and its impact on my heart, I bring my worries and anxieties before God. What specific events or stories are causing me the most concern? How can I respond to the news in a way that aligns with my faith and brings peace to my heart?”

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 46 helps us seek peace, especially in times of turmoil and uncertainty. Read the passage slowly a couple of times. Pay attention to the words, images, phrases, or memories that are stirred within you.

- 1 God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- 3 though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
- 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- 5 God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
- 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
- 7 The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
- 8 Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

9 He makes wars cease

to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;

he burns the shields with fire.

10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

11 The Lord Almighty is with us;

the God of Jacob is our fortress.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, in the midst of the overwhelming news cycle,

I come to you with a heart that is heavy and anxious.

Guide me to focus on your goodness and the blessings in my life.

As I navigate the news of the world, grant me the wisdom

to discern what is true and the grace to respond with love.

I bring you worries and anxieties before you, Lord.

May your peace, which surpasses all understanding,

guard my heart and mind, now and always. Amen.

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