

## Religion and Times of Hardship

During a typical cold February of 2020, we have been hearing and watching how China was hit by this version of corona virus for few months. In the era of social media, news, photos, and videos were spreading around the world like a giant wildfire. By the beginning of March of 2020, a lot of people in many countries were suffering because of the new virus which was called COVID-19. After I heard about the first few COVID-19 cases near to the area where I was living, I became more and more concerned, just like millions of people around the world. When the stay-at-home order was issued in Pennsylvania, I joined millions of Pennsylvanians who stayed home literally. When schools were operating remotely, I moved with my wife and two little kids to my big family house in State College, PA. In the beginning, we enjoyed being together in one place even though I was worried for my parents and my son who had asthma and their ability to fight this virus. We thought that the danger will be gone withing few weeks, but we were wrong. I started thinking about money, how I am going to feed my family, pay my rent, car loan, and many other bills.

Inside all of these difficulties, I found out how humans are very weak regardless of all advancements that we achieved, but something in my heart was calling me to calm down. As a religious person, I have always learned to put my trust in God, and this was the right time to practice what I have learned. I was telling myself that the one who created us is surly able to save us, and the one who gave us all these blessings is indeed able to grant us more and more. When I wake up alone in the middle of the night and pray to God and ask him whatever I want, I feel happy, but doing the same acts of worship during the hardship tasted differently. Being closer to God and seeking refuge in him, granted me a real peace and happiness even in the darkest moments of my life.

At the end, I would like to clarify that believing in God does not mean denying scientific facts. Trusting in God does not mean ignoring precautions measures recommended by scientists and experts.