

## HOME ALONE: LONELINESS IN OUR WORLD TODAY

The latest message series being presented by Deacon Dennis, Fr. Pedro and Deacon Mark remind us of one of the most challenging struggles in our world today. It is quite evident especially in North America, and yes, even in our very city—loneliness

### TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP US CONNECT WITH OTHERS

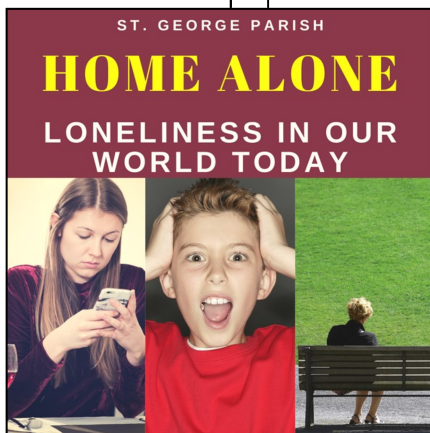
We have the most amazing technology to communicate in addition to the powerful medical breakthroughs, yet one of the most concerning basic issues that affects our lives is that of being alone, forgotten and feeling invisible. This seems impossible for us to comprehend in our modern world but have we actually used our modern technology as a tool to bring us closer together or do we use it as a distraction and thus a wall to connecting with those around us?

### THE PARISH & TECHNOLOGY

We here at the parish have taken advantage of the use of modern technology to hopefully build up the family of Christ. We livestream Masses so that those who are homebound or those who feel isolated can connect. We use our parish website, Facebook and Twitter to share events that are taking place and using it as a method of inviting others to join us so that we can all be together. We even use a program called MINISTRY SCHEDULER PRO that helps coordinate and organize all of our weekend liturgical ministers so that we have people ready to serve. Even writing this article which you are reading either online or before/after Mass was produced by modern technology. It can certainly make things easier, more efficient and more accessible, but it cannot be an end in itself.

Technology is a tool that we as a Church need to use to help share the Good News, but it cannot and does not replace the reality of us actually

connecting with one another. It cannot fill a void of emptiness we have if we feel left out or abandoned. The danger of our modern technological world is that instead of it being a tool of communication and education, it has become for many, a distraction that separates us from one another.



### WHAT IS AT THE CENTRE?

In this lonely world that has so much to offer and opportunities for us to connect — it all comes down to having **our hearts in the right place.**

There is no question that loneliness existed before the iPhone but the modern world brings us so many more easily accessible

distractions that lead us away from really being able to connect and encounter one another. Our faith helps us put things back in right order—inviting us to open our hearts and **placing Jesus at the centre** so that there is balance and a fullness of love that beckons us to share with those around us.

Christ's grace that dwells in our hearts helps us avoid the distractions and lead us to reach out to those who seem invisible, although they are right beside us or to reach out to those who we don't see. The faith term for this is **CONVERSION**. This is a perpetual call for each of us to be able to place Christ at the centre, removing our own ego and all the distractions or unhealthy habits that tries to fill the void only Jesus can satisfy.



This is a daily call of prayer, reconciliation and a choice to make Christ the source of all grace, saying YES to Him and NO to other things. This allows us to

achieve balance and enables us to live our lives for others, reaching out and seeking relationships and supporting those who are in need.

### MISSION TRIP CHANGES MY PERSPECTIVE

Over ten years ago I had the privilege of helping lead a high school group on a mission trip to Kenya, helping build schools. It

was my first trip to Africa and a golden opportunity to meet people on the other side of the world. I was able to discover what true happiness felt like. It was rooted in our care for each other.

All of us on the trip left our technology behind. That meant I left my Blackberry (yes, at one point it was quite a great device) which was my link to the world. I was away from emails, texts and the internet. This allowed me to be free from distractions and to live in the moment. Although it was hard at first — I ended up enjoying being free from the pings and flashing lights of communication. There was no TVs, no CNN and barely electricity at our base camp. All we could do is rely on each other.

What I had realized the most of that two week mission trip, was the joy found in the simplicity of life of our new Kenyan friends. They showed us all how we can truly be happy by connecting with one another. We were overwhelmed by their hospitality, joy and friendship. We were able to get to know one another with less distractions and a greater ability to reflect on our experiences. (by the way — that is what Lent is really about). I also realized that in the midst of their material poverty, they had a richness of love, support and joy as they needed to rely on one another.

I truly enjoy using technology which helps me complete my tasks and hopefully keeps me on track in ministry—but it can never replace the gift of each other. **The root of our happiness is not things, but on the gift of God and one another.** May we always seek to spend time getting to know others and discover the happiness that is mutually shared.