

We continue to follow the guidelines of state and local authorities,

and recommend the same to our congregations.

STAY AT HOME. DO NOT GATHER IN PERSON.

All Association meetings continue to be held on ZOOM.

The Association Office is closed. Staff continue to work from home.

WHAT ABOUT EASTER?

Our best judgment and recommendation is PLAN FOR A DIGITAL EASTER.

Stay and work from home and prepare to do so

UNTIL, AT LEAST, THE END OF APRIL.

From Nayiri Karjian Association General Minister

We are indeed walking through the desolate wilderness of Lent. Isolated and fearful, confronted with a reality we've not known before, each of us tempted to think that we are each alone.

That is the nature of pain. Pain isolates us. Most of us experiencing pain feel that no one understands how we feel and what we're going through. COVID 19, however, proves this wrong. It dismantles the arrogance that causes us to think that each of us is so special, that our pain is special also.

COVID 19 confronts us with the reality that we are all in this together, that we, not only as church and community, as country and society, but even as a world, as a planet are in this together. Our pain is collective, our Isolation communal, our fear and anxiety are shared.

So, I have been pondering the words of Psalm 90, the words of which cannot be more depressing: *"You turn us back to dust... for a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, all our days pass away... so teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart."*

Perhaps this Lent we practice *"counting our days,"* nurturing awareness, living in the moment, being mindful the moment and the day, aware of the grace that surrounds us, sometimes evident, sometimes

hidden... so we may gain a wise heart, find courage and strength at this time, and learn to let go and let God.

I have been pondering human mortality, *ashes to ashes*, and its implications. Each of us is a speck in the eons of the universe, hence quite inconsequential in the big scheme of things, and powerless when life happens to us. On the other hand, the paradox is, each of us is powerful and consequential. What we SAY matters. With one word we can destroy or heal another. What we DO matters, with one act we can annihilate or build-up another.

During this time of Lent I am reflecting on this paradox which renders us powerless in the face of life's surprises, calling us to let go and trust the One who is the ground of our being; yet it also calls us to be aware of our power, the Spirit's gift within us, to recognize that our actions, words and choices have consequences.

During this Lenten season of our lives I am working on nurturing wisdom, being mindful of the moment, aware of the grace that surrounds me, and continuing to be a loving and gracious presence in a world of anxiety and fear. I invite you to join me on this path.

Do not be afraid. Let go. Be wise and mindful. Trust, because God can be trusted.