Written By Fr. Dennis Gallagher, A.A., Provincial Superior of the North American Province.



In a piece for Assumption's alumni magazine a few years back, I was musing on the fact that students rate getting a good job as the #1 reason for going to college. No surprise there, but there's an irony lurking in that. The more apparently practical and pragmatic one approaches the purpose of education, the more one is at the mercy of forces outside of one's control. What's the job market going to be like when I graduate? As long as the economy is humming along, as it has been for some time now, that question does not rise to the level of urgency. But how susceptible we are to taking things for granted.

I was thinking along these lines on hearing that the coronavirus is causing stock prices to plunge and bringing to light how much dependence we have on China. Who knows what further disruption this epidemic/pandemic will cause, but it's one of those moments, apparently, when we are brought face to face with a discomforting truth: that the ground under our feet is not as solid as we might have supposed.

In this political year, it is good to be reminded that this is true, more broadly, about so many of our institutional arrangements. Of course, we should exercise every ounce of judgment we have in choosing those who will lead us. But some measure of the Bible's ambivalence about politics should also guide us. Put not your trust in horses or princes or men, "in whom there is no salvation," as the psalmist frequently tells us.

One need not to be a crisis-monger to understand that there are very few sure bets in life. So much of God's pedagogy in the Bible is aimed at securing our trust in his providential care. **When human means are of no avail, it is then that God has us where he wants us, ready to more completely give ourselves over to his love and mercy.**

So let's fight the coronavirus, but maybe it has other lessons to teach us.