

By Pat Haggerty

I suffer from a malady that is shared by many. It is the “could-a, would-a, should-a syndrome.” This is often confused with the “if only syndrome.” However, the former has many more symptoms. The patient suffers more mental anguish with “could-a, would-a, should-a.” There is much more introspection and more stress. It is symptomatic of a Type A individual who analyzes everything and can’t let go. Whereas, the person experiencing the “if only syndrome” does so for a shorter period of time. There is a degree of discomfort associated with the illness, and the individual undergoes periods of frustration and concern. In all honesty, the prognosis for becoming totally free of either illness is not good!

I will share a secret with you, though. I have discovered a cure for those experiencing symptoms of either illness. It is actually remarkable! One need only take a few successive doses of the medication called “being present” to nearly eradicate the syndrome. The remedy must be taken seriously and with faithfulness. Otherwise, relapses are most certain.

There are some advertisements out there for **being present** and it has become a sort of cure-all. It is only effective when accompanied by reflection and prayer. That is part of the small print that some people ignore. Please don’t ignore those two very crucial directions!

Part of my reflection took me back to my elementary school days at Blessed Sacrament School. Every day when Sister took attendance she would read through the list of her students. Our response was always “present, Sister” or more accurately “present, Ster.” It not only meant that we were physically present in our classroom on Elm Street, but that we were ready to learn,

ready to go on with the day, ready to be good students (at least most of us).

As for the prayer part of this remedy, there is a prayer that I was given a long time ago. It appeared on a prayer card—that was probably given to me by one of those Sisters. It is called "just for a Day" and reads in part:

Oh Lord, if only for a day, I can be really good; be always ready to obey and do the things I should---just for a day.

Oh Lord, if only for a day I can take trials or fun or anything that comes, and say, not my will but Thine be done---just for a day.

The words are somewhat child-like, but we are meant to be child-like in some ways. We are called to be children of God and look to Him as our Father. We are meant to travel this journey day by day looking for new surprises and new challenges. Children don't suffer from "could-a, would-a, should-a." Let us be more child-like, more trusting and more prayerful. Let us be present to the moment and to each other. Let us ask for God's help---just for a day.