

## Pray More Advent Retreat - Transcript

### **Pray, Hope and Don't Worry** **Mary Lenaburg**

Hi everyone. My name is Mary Lenaburg, and it's an absolute privilege and a joy to be with you today. Today we're going to talk a little bit about anxiety, and how we need to guard our hearts against it, especially during this time of Advent, where we are preparing for the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. So before we get started, we're going to ask Our Lady, she's right there, we're going to ask her into our time together as we pray a Hail Mary together. Won't you join me? *In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for our sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

So, as we begin, we're going to begin with the Gospel of Luke, a piece of scripture from Luke. Chapter 21 verse 34. This is the beginning of that verse. ***Be careful or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life.*** That sounds like a whole lot of fun, doesn't it? I don't think so, but it's true, especially during this time of Advent in this season of preparation. The anxieties of our lives can steal away the moments of joy, so I want to talk to you about our 3 ways, 3, that we can guard our hearts against anxiety during this season of Advent, no matter what it is that you're facing.

The first way is pray. Pray. When we cast our cares upon the Lord, He hears and answers our prayers. He knows the deepest desires of our hearts. He knows everything about the situation that you're currently facing, what is overwhelming you, what is causing anxiety in your life, and He wants to help you with it. He wants to be present to you. So how is our Lord present to us? Well, as Catholics, He's present in the Eucharist. So go to Adoration. Pray. Sit with Him a while. Let Him bring you peace. Rest within Him. Another way, through prayer, is holy scripture. Prayer is our way of talking to our Lord, holy scripture is His way of talking to us.

Speaking of scripture, I'm going to give you 2 of them right now that will help you when you're guarding your heart against anxiety, or working your way through an anxious situation. The first is 1<sup>st</sup> Peter Chapter 5, verse 6: ***Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares for you.*** How beautiful is that? God does care for us. He is our father. He is our savior. He is the one who created us in love and for love. So by casting our anxieties upon Him, by giving them back to Him, He is loving us, He is bringing us peace, He is giving us the grace to carry on.

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A second scripture for you. Psalm 55, verse 22: ***Cast your burdens on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never permit the righteous to be moved.*** Okay. He said it in His holy, inspired, divine word. He will not allow the righteous to be moved. Cast all your anxieties upon Him, for He cares for you. How awesome is that? Right there in scripture. Pray, first thing we do. Hope is the second thing we do. For those of you that know of the life of Saint Padre Pio, you know where I'm going with this. But I won't give away the ending just yet. Hope. Do not allow anxious thoughts, being overwhelmed, to steal moments of joy. So how can we do that? Action is the enemy of anxiety. Act. Action brings about hope.

What do I mean exactly? Well, it's quite simple actually. If you take action, something needs to be done, a situation needs to be addressed – If you physically move your body and take action, then you don't have to worry about being anxious, because you're taking action. There is a direct correlation between activity and anxiety. When we stay in our heads with our anxious thoughts and being overwhelmed, and we don't take action to step outside of those thoughts, then we get ourselves into a little bit of trouble. It's like a gerbil in a wheel. It doesn't change, nothing changes. It's a lot of negative self-talk, we're lying, you know, we're repeating Satan's lies to ourselves. "I'm not good enough," "I don't have the skills to do what needs to be done," "I can't do it just right."

Perfectionism. Ugh. I struggle with this one oh so much. I like things done a certain way, and I have come to understand, as they say in Silicon Valley, "Done is better than perfect." It's still hard sometimes, but it's so true. Act. Get it done. It doesn't have to be perfect, it just has to be done. What does action bring about in us? Hope. If I get it done, then I can move on to the next thing, or this positive reaction happens because I've gotten it done. Hope.

The third thing is don't worry. How? You're sitting behind the screen and you're going "But how, Mary? How do I not worry?" Well, I have a beautiful quote from Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, and she says "We know certainly that our God calls us to a holy life. We know that He gives us every grace, every abundant grace. And though we are so weak of ourselves, this grace is able to carry us through every obstacle and every difficulty." Don't worry, God's got this. God knows your name, He knows your circumstance, He knows what trials and anxieties you are facing right now, today. He knows them. And knowing all of that, He can still work beauty, and glory, and honor through your brokenness, through your situation, through your anxiety, if we just ask Him in. He knows what you're made of, because He made you.

So, how do we guard our hearts against anxiety during the season of Advent? Three things. Saint Padre Pio taught us best with these three things: Pray, hope, and don't worry, for worry is useless. He should know. He spent the entirety of his priesthood and adult life battling Satan on a daily basis, and he took great solace from his prayer with the Lord, from his time in adoration. Pray, hope, and

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don't worry. It will get done, because grace upon grace upon grace will be added to you when we bring every care, every worry, every anxiety to the Lord, and allow Him to work in that with us.

I leave you with a final scripture. In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 6, verses 30-34, God gives us this beautiful way of living. ***But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore, do not be anxious saying "What will we eat?" "What will we drink?" Or "What will we wear?" For the Gentiles seek all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first His Kingdom, His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.***

Guard your hearts, my brothers and sisters. Guard them. Hand over to the Lord those anxious thoughts, what worries you, what overwhelms you, what concerns you. Act. Step out of that anxiety and into hope. And be happy, because Jesus is coming. The Savior is on His way. I wish you a happy, holy, and fruitful Advent, and as this talk comes to an end, I think it's appropriate that we pray the prayer our Father taught us to pray. Together, shall we? *In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.* Thank you so much for joining me today my friends. Remember: pray, hope, and don't worry.