

Pastor Francis wrote this sad reflection on SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2020, eleven days after the World Health Organisation declared the novel coronavirus (COVID - 19) a global Pandemic and five days after the premier of the Province of Ontario, Doug Ford, declared a provincial state of Emergency.

“How lonely sits the city that was full of people! (Lamentations 1:1a)

This morning while lying in bed, I read the solemn words above. They popped out of the pages of Scripture. After reading, I gazed through our bedroom window, and although the skies were clear as crystal, that betrayed the starkness of the gloomy, deserted streets beneath. Never have I seen Eglinton Avenue so desolate, not even on a Sunday morning when most people tend to sleep in. But this morning is different. The world is in a state of absolute surrender and uncertain resolve because the coronavirus has seized control. People are cooped up in their houses and condos and apartments. All over the globe humans are dropping like flies – victims of the novel coronavirus, an invisible, deadly enemy. The city of Toronto, at least in the area where we reside, near Eglinton Avenue and Laird Drive, is deserted. Not even the birds are singing on this third full day of the new Spring season! No one seems to care or notice that it is Spring; that it is the time to smell the fresh air outside. For in the air outside, lurks the deadly enemy. Social distancing and self-isolation are the new norm. No one is spared the wrath of the coronavirus. From Athens to Zimbabwe, the earth is a city deserted! No one is asking questions anymore. We have concluded that there are no answers. No answers because there are no questions. No questions because no answers are sufficient. No answers are sufficient because the future is uncertain. We believe we will get through this. Yet no one, not even the medical experts know how we will get through or when, or what’s on the other side whenever we get through. And today is Sunday – what would people do on Monday? Schools are shut down. Most, if not all businesses are closed! What would the rhythm of life be? Those who only live for the weekend are not able to work from Monday to Thursday while looking forward to Friday when the acronym TGIF brings temporary bliss. What would they live for? Where would they turn to? To whom and to what would they turn to fulfill the void that must be present? What would they do when the wine and beer and vodka are not sufficient to quench the appetite? How would they drown their sorrows? Would people start longing for death rather than life? God forbid! But no one knows. “How lonely sits the city that was full of people!”