

Normal is a Point on the Curve

By Carl Brown

...Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come... Isaiah 36:1

I reopened my office yesterday, after nearly six months of working at home. In fact, I am writing this meditation from my office Monday night, before heading home.

This is a strange feeling, coming back here. As if the world were returning to normal. How we long for that.

The first thing I did when I came in today was rearrange my furniture. I moved my desk so that I am sitting farthest from the door, and facing it. My visitors' chairs are six feet away from me. My mask is beside me. I have made a note: buy hand sanitizer.

Not one thing is where it was before the pandemic. Everything is changed. Several things are permanently gone. Whatever is left is in a new orientation.

I'm back, and nothing is the same. Nothing is normal. I can see people, talk to them, but I wear a mask or I keep my distance. I wash my hands more. This is normal.

Also, the visitors' chairs are empty: I am not seeing people in my office yet. There are rules. I have to go over pages and pages of guidelines to see what I need to do to make it safe for me to have visitors. For the same reason the churches are mostly not open. We've added sign-in sheets, for contact tracing. The Diocese has rules to follow. To some these rules seem silly, or overdone. From what I've seen, coronavirus is new and frighteningly damaging, and precautions are appropriate.

And life must in some way go on. Normal must give way to new normal.

The concierge and a number of my colleagues were happy to see me. I was astounded to see that they were not wearing masks: we have a "safe area" behind the main door. I have

mixed feelings about that. We are keeping social distance. There are new markings on the floor.

Marg told me I should go back to work. She said that I was becoming afraid to go out. And she's right. I know - I tell my clients - that the best thing is to face your fears.

Some utter nonsense on social media suggests that we should trust God and not wear masks. These same people take guns with them when they go shopping.

Anas ibn Malik reported: A man said, "O Messenger of Allah, should I tie my camel and trust in Allah, or should I leave her untied and trust in Allah?" The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Tie her and trust in Allah."¹

Trust God and wear a mask.

¹ Daily Hadith Online: Wisdom of Prophet Muhammad.
<https://abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2012/11/17/trust-allah-tie-your-camel/> accessed August 17, 2020