

5 important truths to remember at the start of the third COVID school year

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last year and a half has largely been an unsolicited academic and emotional rollercoaster ride for students, teachers and parents. Unsure of what's to come this year, we look to our faith for strength, direction and hope.

Here are five truths to keep in mind as the year begins:

1. You are not alone in this. In fact, everyone on the *planet* is with you in the unique travails brought on by the pandemic. There is strength in our sense of solidarity and in knowing others can relate to the specific trials of parenting and guiding children at this given moment. Additionally, countless others in generations past have endured various adversities and plagues before us. They are worthy encouragers from their vantage point of heaven or purgatory. Ask their assistance.
2. In moments of temptation to discouragement and being overwhelmed, pray "Jesus, I trust in You!" Repeat this until it fixes your eyes on Him; He is trustworthy.
3. Carve out times of rest, personally and as a family. With the cumulative fatigue garnered over the pandemic it is perhaps increasingly important to "'rest a while'" (Mk 6:31).
4. Get outdoors, even if just to take five deep breaths or feel the wind on your face. Nature is God's first love song to us. Allow yourself to hear the melody and let His Love recharge you through it.
5. Remember: God is with you. He's "'with you always, until the end of the age'" (Mt 28:20). And He's with you "like

a mighty champion" (Jer 20:11). Therefore, if God is for you, who or what can be against you? (Rom 8:31).