**WAYS TO NAVIGATE A CRISIS**

Excerpt from *Four Infallible Ways to Navigate the Winds of Crisis***,** by [James Bascom](http://www.returntoorder.org/author/jbascom/)

 The burning problems facing our country today do not have easy, obvious solutions. One thing we can do, however, is to adopt the right disposition so that we may not find ourselves deceived by the many false solutions that will lead our country to ruin. There are four specific things we must ask of God if we wish to successfully navigate the winds of crisis.

**First,** **pray for calm.**

 In times of crisis, those people who dominate themselves and maintain a cool head successfully emerge unscathed. In fact, it is precisely in times of deepest crisis when we need calm the most.

 A sign of personal greatness is the ability to stay cool while under fire, whether it be on the battlefield, during a debate, or in times of social unrest or confusion like our own. Some of the most memorable stories of heroism, for example, were on the battlefield when officers calmly and valiantly exposed themselves to gunfire in order to calm their men and lead a successful counterattack. In times of crisis – in life no less than war – those who allow themselves to be overcome by fear or panic will always perish.

 For those with Faith, we have the sublime example of Our Lord Jesus Christ when he slept on the boat of his Apostles on the Sea of Galilee during a storm. Peter woke up the Master with the despairing words, “Master, we perish!” With a divine tranquility, Jesus commanded the winds and the waves to cease. To his astonished Apostles, he asked, “Where is your faith?”

**Second,** **ask to be guided by** **reason, not emotions**.

 Fear and desperation are strong emotions that can lead people to forget or even deny what their reason tells them is true. When we see institutions crumble and our way of life under threat, we may easily allow ourselves to be deceived by slick propaganda and charismatic leaders who more often than not lead nations to ruin.

 Our reason must also be firmly rooted in principles, namely, true philosophy, natural law, and the traditional Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Empires come and go, great leaders rise and fall, but the perennial principles taught by the Church must be our true refuge, especially in times of chaos and confusion such as ours. It is more important than ever to scrutinize proposed solutions in accordance with Faith and morals, to study the burning issues of the day with seriousness, and to resist the tendency to solve very complex problems with over-simplified “solutions.”

**Third,** **pray to God, through the intercession of Mary, for courage**.

 Our generation is being forced to reckon with a crisis that has been brewing for generations. Seeds sewn centuries ago are only now coming to fruition. The left has expended enormous amounts of time, money, and effort to infiltrate every institution of power and influence to subvert what remains of the Christian social order.

 In the face of such a daunting threat, it is easy to despair and simply retreat from the field of battle to await the inevitable collapse of society. It seems that the forces of the left are simply too strong to resist. This position, sometimes called the “Benedict Option,” is being promoted by some Catholic commentators. Although attractive to many, the “Benedict Option” can easily lead to an unconditional surrender to evil. And as any good spiritual director would say, surrender to the devil is not the path to Heaven.

 Nor is it rooted in reality. Evil has never simply allowed the good to live in peace.  Rather, evil men actively hunt down the good to pervert and destroy them. The ancient Romans sought out Christians and killed them wherever they were found. Islam has spent its entire existence invading Christian lands. Socialists have sought ever more sinister ways to conquer souls through propaganda, education, and culture. The only effective response to evil is and always has been to fight back with redoubled vigour.

 And lest we forget, it is we and not evil who have the certainty of victory. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself promised that the gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church, and Our Lady of Fatima declared before the whole world that “Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.” The Church has survived two thousand years and can confidently say to the world, “I have seen other winds, I have weathered other storms.” (Cicero, Familiares, 12, 25, 5).

 We must imitate the confidence and Faith of Saint Joan of Arc, who declared, “In God’s name, the soldiers will fight, and He will grant victory.”

**Fourth, show** **openness and docility to the winds of the Holy Spirit**.

 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways,” the Scriptures say (Isaiah 55:8).  Although we often don’t understand why they come and for what purpose, the trials and tribulations of life that God sends us are always for our greater good. God may send us a grace to perform a particular mission, or may ask us to make a unique sacrifice that is completely beyond our limited understanding.

 The saints and heroes of history were asked to perform unimaginable deeds in the face of seemingly impossible situations. The Apostles, as they began the conversion of the world to Christianity, are just a few examples of heroes who heard the voice of grace and corresponded to it. Although they could never have foreseen the consequences of their obedience to God’s grace, it always resulted in some of the most glorious chapters in the history of the Church.

 Like Our Lord in the Garden of Olives, we must respond to these moments of trial, confusion, and suffering with docility, obedience, and humility. “Not as I will, but as you will” should be our lifelong response to them. Rather than consult our own will, we must discern what God’s will is in a given situation.

 “…at a time when the situation calls for firm principles, decisive action, and unity, we could find ourselves scattered in a confusing jumble. A psychological climate could reign where there is a doubting of all certainties, a supremacy of the emotions, and a rule of relativism. What characterizes these false solutions is a general loss of faith in political solutions and a corresponding tendency not to believe in anything at all. We run the risk of a reaction driven, not by convictions, but only by frustration, whim, and rage.” (John Horvat, *Return to Order*, p. 110).

 Let us pray to Jesus, through the intervention of his Blessed Mother, to have the courage to face our present crisis with true Christian heroism and the wisdom to discern and avoid the traps laid by Satan, the Father of lies.