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A Way Out of the Constant Frenzy

By The Rev. Rachel Rickenbaker

Some of the most valuable life lessons we learn from children. As my daughter and I prepare to leave the house in the morning, she usually begins looking for things to bring along. It doesn't take long before her arms are full of toys and stuffed animals. Walking out the door, her arms loaded down, she inevitably begins to drop things.

The other day when this happened, I said to her, "Your arms are so full, you're dropping things left and right." Then I thought to myself, "What a lesson for us all." How often we take on too many things. How often we carry too many things, including, but not limited to, our cares, concerns, and anxieties.

It's hard not to in our current state of affairs. We worry about our loved ones' health and safety; about the welfare of our kids, teachers, and others in our schools. We worry about those around our country facing wildfires, storms, and other natural disasters. We worry about those who are most oppressed – the hungry, the homeless, those without work, and those facing racism

and injustices of many kinds. We worry about our world, the climate, and on and on.

By the end of the day, sometimes there's not much energy left to even take care of ourselves.

It's hard to focus on essential priorities when we've grabbed onto so many things. I find myself having to make lists as I leave the house, just to make sure I don't forget anything. Inevitably, I often still forget something.

At the root of all this anxiety and worry and forgetfulness lies the belief that we can do it all. That God is there, yes, but distant and watching, while we run around anxiously. We take on so many things because we think that we *can* and *must* do it all. We cannot; and ultimately, we will end up depleted.

In such trying times, I turn to the words of St. Peter in his first letter:

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."
(1 Peter 5:6)

"Humble yourselves," St. Peter says. That is a challenge because we want to have control over our lives, our health, and our situations. If only we try harder and work harder, we think we can gain more control. Yet, it is by giving up our need for control and handing it over to Jesus that we find strength.

It is in our weakness and temptation that Christ reaches out his hand to lift us up. This seems like such a contradiction. The more we hand over to God, the more we find the peace that God provides.

When we cast our anxiety on the Lord, it does not mean we won't ever worry. It does not mean we turn a blind eye toward the concerns of a hurting world or our own needs. What it does mean is that we open ourselves up to receiving the grace that God so generously pours into our hearts and lives. We then find we have more strength to share in the joys and burdens of others.

Prayerfully, those in the Church will do the same for us. Furthermore, when we cast our anxiety on the Lord, we are showing others that there is a way out of the constant frenzy. God does not desire our exhaustion or burnout. By laying down our anxieties at the feet of our Savior, we find that He is full of abundant mercy and grace.

Our lives are often full, so full we don't have room for much else. We begin to drop things, leaving us feeling overwhelmed, discouraged, and helpless. Thanks be to God there is help and a way forward. That way is with Jesus.

When we get overwhelmed and anxious, we can remember to cast our cares on the Lord. For he cares for you and can surely bear your load.