

Distinctives: God & the pandemic

Isaiah Michael Rayel reminds us of God's power



Isaiah Michael Rayel is a medical student in Galway

I recently attended a church conference where it was asked, 'what aspect of God should you be more aware of in your everyday life: awe of God, fear of God, or love of God?' I considered for a moment before asking myself, 'where do I most often fall short?'

I personally neglect the awe of God's the most. I continually find myself leaning upon my own understanding; I worry about the future, unconvinced that God can turn a hopeless situation around.

When COVID-19 struck in March 2020, I was a leader of CMF NUI Galway. It was a lot of work, but rewarding. Our group is small but has a strong community. When March 2020 hit, our in-person meetings and my time as president came to an unfortunately early end. We couldn't have a final CMF meal, or our end of semester worship evening before exams commenced. We were unable to see our final year members before they commenced their journeys as doctors.

We accepted this new reality but wondered, what does this mean for the future of CMF Galway? As leaders, we were supposed to appoint successors for the new academic year, but we struggled to find people for the roles. Many had too much on their plates already.

During the summer months, all we could do was pray and hope God would provide a way for CMF Galway to continue. Our prayers were answered when the current president stepped forward, asking to take up a leadership role. Together we planned how CMF could continue to exist online. With the help of Ashley Stewart in the CMF Office, a plan soon formed. We created a CMF committee, grew as a community, and thrived in our online meetings. We accomplished far more online than we might have done otherwise.

Reflecting now, I see that God not only allowed CMF Galway to survive, but to reap a rich harvest in this difficult season. This is a poignant reminder of



God's power to make a way when there seems to be no way; to make the impossible, possible. I am reminded of Matthew 6:25-27: 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?' These beautiful words from the Sermon on the Mount resonate with me deeply. God created us to be conquerors. As believers, we should live our lives assured of our Lord's omnipotence.

An important lesson I've learned is that God can use any season, circumstance, or person, no matter how short we fall or how hopeless things appear. I am in awe of his power to do the impossible. God will guide our footsteps if we allow him to; if we trust and humble ourselves before him, he will always make a way. ■