

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for the 5th Week in Lent ~

O Lord,
Like the traveler
Lifting the fallen on
On the road to Jericho,
Healing all his wounds,
You went to the tomb of Lazarus
And would not let him die,
But loosed the bonds of death,
So great was your love for him.

O Savior,
I believe
You weep at every death,
And pray at every tomb,
For all the dead
Whose faith
is known to you alone.

Like Lazarus,
Call us your friends,
Stay in our company,
Share what we have,
Come to our aid,
And grant us
Eternal life.
Amen.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

The Campus Ministry Office is located in **Our Lady Chapel**.
phone: [440] 473-3560 [office] or 216-570-9276 [cell].
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Our Lady Chapel



Our Lady Chapel is a Roman Catholic community founded in the love of the Father, centered in Christ, and rooted in the Holy Cross tenets of building family and embracing diversity. We are united in our journey of faith through prayer and sacrament, and we seek growth through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in liturgy and outreach, while responding to the needs of humanity.

PENANCE SERVICE:

Our community celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will take place this **Monday, March 27th at 7:00 PM**. Our service is centered around reflections of the various characters involved in the passion and death of Jesus. There will also be songs and hymns, and a time to bring ourselves from our sinful ways back to the Lord. As we confront our own sinfulness, we realize that we, too, have a part to play in the death of Jesus. The service will last about 45 minutes. There will be a time for individual confessions following the service, for those who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity. Please join us.

**SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL LENTEN EVENTS & SERVICES:**

- **Lenten Communal Penance Service** will be on **Monday, March 27th at 7:00 PM**
- **Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 6th at 7:00 PM.**
- **Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, April 7th at 1:30 PM.**
- **Proclamation of the Passion, Veneration of the Cross and Communion Service on Good Friday, April 7th at 3:00 PM.**
- **Blessing of Easter Foods** will be at **12:00 noon on Saturday, April 8th.**
- **Easter Vigil Service** will be at **8:30 PM on Saturday, April 8th.**
- **Easter Sunday Mass** will be at **10:00 AM on Sunday, April 9th.**

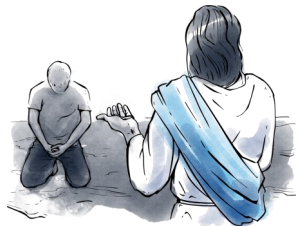
**TAKING A KNEE:**

The notion of “quality time” in human relationships can be a bit suspect. Sometimes, of course, it's the best we can do. But an emotional epiphany or an expression of need can't be predicted; moments of true connection do not happen according to a schedule. What matters is simply that we put someone else first, prioritizing presence and giving open-ended time to a beloved person.

And that's also true of our relationship with God. Some of us give him the “quality time” of Sunday mornings, but otherwise insist upon calling the shots ourselves, chasing after the idols we have created. It's tempting to think that we can have it all — that our obsessions, our distractions, our insistence on autonomy — all these can co-exist with a flourishing relationship with God. But in fact, there is a tradeoff.

In worshipping our self-made gods, we inevitably put our Lord second, exchanging the truth and glory of the living God for, as the psalmist derisively describes it, “the image of a grass-eating bullock” [see Psalm 106:19-20]. Whether that idol is a curated Instagram profile, professional success, a perfectly-toned body, or money, the fundamental problem is that it diverts our adoring gaze from God to ourselves. As C. S. Lewis observed in *The Weight of Glory*: “We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.” Only God — whose mystery and might are far beyond human telling — deserves our adoration. Let us pray for the wherewithal to recognize and dismantle our false gods and to bow down before the one who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

—taken from the writings of Betsy Cahill which appear on the internet

**BE AWARE:**

2 Life changes in the instant — the ordinary instant."

—Joan Didion

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Jesus calls us to pray for one another. Please keep all these people in your prayers.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Kathy and Jim Pender, parents of Mark ['83] and Michael ['90] Pender, grandparents of Matthew ['11], Charlotte ['13] Pender, and Katherine ['17] and Tyler ['19] Clark, who are both seriously ill with health issues.
- For Kevin Kennedy, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic and lung cancer.
- For Maryann Lucas, aunt of Art Instructor, Susan Southard, who is recovering from open heart surgery
- For Jackie Rusnik, aunt of Jakub Bennish ['30], who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For Dale Rusnik, uncle of Jakub Bennish ['30], who is undergoing treatment for various medical issues.
- For Father Diego Irarrazaval, C.S.C., who is critically ill following a stroke.
- For Megan Schaefer Wenker ['09], who is undergoing treatment for lung cancer.
- For Maria Ruiz, mother of Elina Gurney, grandmother of Joseph and Christina Gurney, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Anna Heryak, Aunt for Mike Heryak, great aunt of Lilian Heryak Tran ['09], Rosa ['12] and Edwin ['17] Heryak, who is under the care of Hospice.
- For Patti Gorman, who is ill.
- For Myron Shibley ['58], who is in rehab following back surgery.
- For Paul Hannon, who has serious health issues.
- For Sharon Wilson, wife of Brother Ken's nephew, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Matthew Peterson, father of Landon Peterson ['21]
- For Sue Heryak, Aunt for Mike Heryak, great aunt of Lilian Heryak Tran ['09], Rosa ['12] and Edwin ['17] Heryak
- For Eloise Finazzo, grandmother of Marisa ['16] and Nicci ['24] Finazzo.
- For William Logsdon, brother of Father Peter Logsdon, C.S.C.
- For Sister Beatrice Pieper, C.S.C.
- For Bob Wolfe
- For Sister Carol Campbell, R.S.C.J., former teacher at Glen Oak School

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For our Muslim Brothers and Sisters who are observing the time of Ramadan.
- For the victims of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria; also for their families and all the first responders.
- For the Holy Cross Religious in Haiti, and for the people of that country, which is under siege because of political and civil strife.
- For a family going through a difficult time.
- For an end to violence and racial injustice in our society.
- For an end to sexual abuse and lack of respect for human persons.
- For a greater respect for human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.
- For all caregivers.
- For all service men and women serving our country, and for their families.

GOOD ADVICE:

Put yourself in God's hands; he abandons no one.

—St. Brother Andre, C.S.C.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Jesus calls us to pray for one another. Please keep all these people in your prayers.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Susan Vance-Johnson, sister of Chief Advancement Strategy Officer, Ray Murphy, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- For Ken Matty, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Rick DeBacco [‘99], brother of Michelle DeBacco Chiacchiari [‘96], uncle of Aurelia [‘28], and Olivia [‘30] Chiacchiari, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatitis.
- For Brother Walter Gluhm, C.S.C., who is under to care of hospice.
- For Chuck Shade, father of Loren Shade, grandfather of Michael, Madeline, and Charles Shade, who is in seriously ill with several health issues.
- For Chuck Campanella, father of Anthony Campanella, who is in rehab following serious surgery.
- For Bill McGinley, father of Chief Academic Officer, Elizabeth Edmondson, and grandfather of Mollie [‘21] and Abby [‘23] Edmondson, who is recovering from health treatment.
- For Laurie Lozier, sister of Fathers Bill and Jim Lies, C.S.C, who has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of dementia.
- For Kim Clark, who is undergoing treatment for an aggressive form of cancer.
- For Paula Smith, mother of Tyler [‘10] and Alec [‘13] Smith, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Findley Stay, husband of former Gilmour Instructor, Emily Stay, father of Allen Stay [‘87], who is undergoing treatment for a serious blood disorder.
- For Andy Andino, Sr., father of Music Director, Andy Andino, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Jill Shemory, mother of Adam [‘08], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Carol Lowen, mother of Denise Shade, grandmother of Madeline, Michael, and Charles Shade, who is undergoing treatment for Breast Cancer.
- For Sue Elliott, who is critically ill with complications of Parkinson’s Disease.
- For Cameron Monesmith, who is recovering from Brain surgery
- For Baylea O’Brian, friend of former Gilmour Teacher, Erin Thompson, who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkins Lymphoma
- For Walter Carey, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.
- For Carol Triplett, sister of Linda McGraw, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Judy Collins, aunt of Chief Academic Officer, Elizabeth Edmondson, great-aunt of Mollie [‘21] and Abbie [‘23] Edmondson, who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.
- For Marina McCarter, grandmother of Aaron [‘25] and Mason [‘28] McCarter, who is ill
- For Susan Plavcan, sister-in-law of Linda McGraw, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For James Law, husband of LS resource associate, Elana Law, who is undergoing treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- For Fletcher Linsz, brother of Logan Linsz [‘26], who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkin Lymphoma.
- For Michael Nestor [‘98], who is undergoing treatment for a rare form of cancer.
- For Bernice Girgash, aunt of Basketball Coach and Counselor, Dan DeCrane, and great-aunt of Mackenzie DeCrane [‘36], who is undergoing treatment for cancer..
- For Melita Chiacchiari, mother of Mark [‘94], mother-in-law of Michelle DeBacco [‘96], grandmother of Aurelia [‘28], and Olivia [‘30] Chiacchiari, who is undergoing further treatment for cancer.
- For Mike Heryak, husband of Janet, father of Lillian [‘09], Rosa [‘12] and Edwin [‘17] Heryak, who is seriously ill.



FAITH EDUCATION:

Faith Education meets next on Sunday, April 2nd at 8:45 AM. There are no classes on Sunday, March 12th, March 19th, or March 26th because of Spring Break. As has been our custom in the past, our Faith Education Classes are followed by our 10 AM Mass which is held in the chapel. **If you have any questions, please contact Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560].** Thank you.



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, April 5th at 6:30 PM. Bible Study continues to meet bi-weekly. The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God’s word. It’s a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can’t come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God’s word.



Our topic: The Events of Holy Week

We also need your help — we need future topics. **So, if you have a topic that you would like us to discuss, please let Father John know.** Mark your calendars and be part of this wonderful activity that will deepen your spiritual journey. **We will meet every other week — topic to be decided at the end of the previous meeting.** Join us. You’ll have a blast, and celebrate your faith along the way..

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Sunday, March 26: 5 th Week in Lent	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, March 27:	Check with Office for time
Tuesday, March 28:	Check with Office for time
Wednesday, March 29:	Check with Office for time
Thursday, March 30:	Check with Office for time
Friday, March 31:	Check with Office for time
Saturday, April 1: Vigil of Palm Sunday	5:00 PM In Person
Sunday, April 2: Palm Sunday	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:

Blessed Basile Moreau was the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, to which Fr. John and the Brothers at Gilmour belong. We have two booklets with Novenas to Blessed Basile Moreau. One is used for a personal intention or healing; the other is used when praying for the intention or healing of someone other than yourself. The Novenas were composed by Father Thomas Looney, C.S.C. Many have received blessings and healings through the intercession of Blessed Basile Moreau, and now we want to extend this invitation to you and your family. Please see Father John and he will be glad to give you the booklets.



A REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:

As enter this 5th Week in Lent, the Scripture Readings reflect upon God's work of bringing us to real life. We are confronted with our experiences of God's breathing the Spirit into our drooping souls. This Lenten pilgrimage consists of weeks, days, hours and moments given to us as gifts of true life. We are struggling to uncover what is of death and sadness to our spirits.

Jesus told His disciples that those who grieve are blest, but there is a difference between the blessedness of grieving and the imprisonment of pouting, blaming, regretting, and or denial. We pray to receive the grace and blessing of the new life-moments promised through the Paschal Mystery. Not every moment will be a victory, a success, but every moment is offered through God's love. This is where belief is lived — or unbelief leads to the death of the spirit.

The Prophet Ezekiel is transported to a bone-yard of sorts [Ezekiel 37:1-14]. The voice of the Lord tells the prophet to call these bones back to sinews and flesh. He does so, and his words bring about shaking, rattling and rising that begin to occur. Ezekiel is told that the bones are the people of Israel in exile which has been a death. These who are reborn will take their place in their true land. What seemed to be dead was really asleep, and the warm breath of God has awakened their spirits.

For the past 3 weeks, Jesus has been presented as "Living Water" [the Woman at the Well — John 4], as the "Light of the World" [the blind man — John 9], and now today as the "Resurrection" [Lazarus — John 11]. Next weekend we will celebrate Palm Sunday at the beginning of Holy Week. We are all invited to ponder our following of Jesus through His death to our resurrection.



When we decide to follow Jesus, we will have to live the challenges that come from all sides. There will be invitations to reconsider and follow other forms of living. Snow-like coverings will attempt to freeze out what is always growing in the believers — their faith. Those deciding to follow Jesus cannot take the Jerusalem by-pass and meet up at the Resurrectional reunion.

In John's Gospel, the disciples agree reluctantly to go with Jesus back to Judea where the Jews had been planning recently to kill Jesus. "Might as well go with him," they decide. His friend Lazarus has been reported to be sick and Jesus delays going to visit him and his two sisters, Mary and Martha.

As has been the case in the past several weeks, John again leads us on a literary or dramatic tension created for the single purpose of Jesus revealing God's glory. God once again creates or reveals a situation where Jesus will be able to call his listeners — watchers — to a decision of belief. In last-week's story, being healed from blindness was really about believing as seeing; this week, God intensifies the theme. Lazarus was in the tomb and smelled like it. Jesus brings him back to life, but for John's Gospel, believing is what living is. As the man who was born blind was a symbol or type of all human's being blind to the presence of God in Christ, so Lazarus is a symbol of humanity's being called out of eternal "not-living" and into the light of faith.

Jesus loved Lazarus — he is a symbol of us all. Jesus ordered that Lazarus — we — be untied and set to go free. Freedom for John's Jesus is seeing and living out the relationship which Jesus has been "sent" to offer us — "Now many of the Jews who had come out to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him" [John 11:1-145]. They, as with Lazarus, are brought out of their tombs of death, which for John, is unbelief, just as with those who said they could see, were, for John's Jesus, blind.

When a person is blind, she or he cannot do all the things they would like to be able to do. When one is dead, the things of life are denied them. There are many forms of death and of blindness for us. As Light, Jesus does not say that everything will be clear as day. As Resurrection, Jesus does not take away all forms of death and confinement, but keeps calling us to "Come out and play."

DEATH AND RESURRECTION:

A critical reading of Scripture shows us that we profess a constantly evolving faith. It's always on the move. Just when we think we've nailed it down, we read the next author and discover it's shifted once again. Because our sacred authors are committed to sharing their ever-changing insights with us, we have no choice but to accompany them on their unique faith journey. Nowhere is this movement clearer than in the Scripture Readings for this 5th Week in Lent.

Though I learned very early in my grade school religion classes what exactly was going to happen to me when I took my last mortal breath, our Christian sacred authors never attended those classes. We know from St. Paul, that the early Christians who had the misfortune to die before Jesus' Second Coming, thought that they would simply have to spend time in their graves awaiting the "great event". They would rise only when Jesus returned [see 1 Thessalonians 4].

The first two evangelists — Mark and Matthew — never say anything which would contradict Paul's theology. But by the mid-80's — when Luke writes his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles — faith in the risen Jesus' imminent return is beginning to wane. We hear in Luke's narrative of Stephen's martyrdom that Jesus comes for him at the moment of death — he doesn't have to wait for the Parousia to have that glorious experience [see Acts 7]. In some sense, Christians can now expect to have their "personal Parousia" when they die.

John takes Luke's theology one step further when he writes his gospel in the mid-90's. He uses Jesus' raising of Lazarus as the vehicle to convey it [John 11:1-45]. In her conversation with Jesus, Mary gives the "old" theology — "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." John's Jesus then provides us with the "new and improved" theology — "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."

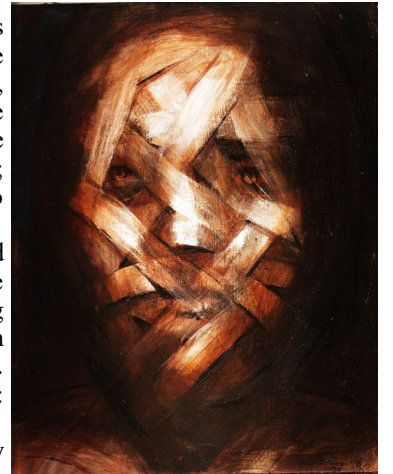
All who study John know about his knack for pushing "realized eschatology." In other words, what we expect to happen only at the end of time — the "eschaton" — John presumes is already happening right here and now. In regard to the afterlife, he's convinced such an existence is already part of our lives even before we breathe our last. In this particular passage, he demonstrates his belief with a sign: Lazarus is alive though he physically died.

Our sacred authors have come a long way from the 6th century BCE days of Ezekiel when there was no belief in an afterlife as we know it. For the Lord to return all the exiled Chosen People to the Promised Land, he'll have to actually open up some graves, pull them out and bring them back. But this will be a unique resuscitation — only these particular Jews will experience it. Everyone else's life will still definitely end with their physical deaths.

Yet even after Jesus' death and resurrection — now that all people have a chance to achieve eternal life — we're still not 100% certain in what that life consists. Paul can assure the church in Rome: "the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you" [see Romans 8:11]. But we know from Paul's Thessalonian theology that, unlike Luke and John, he doesn't expect that life to begin until after the Parousia.

Knowing the biblical history revolving around faith in an afterlife, why would we believe that John has provided us with the last word on the subject? Presuming the topic is still evolving. This is one case in which we can validly ask: "What do you think?"

—taken from the writings of Father Roger Karban, which appear on the internet



ARE YOU READY TO GO WITH HIM?

As John the Evangelist shows us how he understood Jesus, we run into some disconcerting ideas. Last week, we heard that the blind man's disability was not a result of anyone's sin, but the occasion for seeing the glory of God [John 9:1-41]. This week, Jesus explains that Lazarus' illness "is for the glory of God that the Son of God may be glorified through it" [John 11:1-45].

That could sound a bit like my scrupulous Irish ancestors' belief that God sends suffering to purify us, or that afflictions make up for sin. That raises the question: "Does God cause or allow bad things happen to good people for God's own sake? To balance the divine scales?"

That's one oft-preached way of understanding of Jesus' mission. In this perspective, it was God's plan and will that Jesus suffer and die because there was no other way to atone for human sin. Of course, when we think about that, we might begin to wonder why God's power would be so limited, why God would have to follow a strict law of retaliation. Might that theology be blasphemous?

Scripture scholar, Jesuit Father Silvano Fausti says that the Gospel of John has no Transfiguration scene because John's whole Gospel gradually reveals Jesus' glory, God's presence in human flesh and history. John's entire Gospel is an unfolding Epiphany.

From that perspective, we see Jesus constantly confronting evil — the natural evil of sickness and death, and the human-caused evil of betraying or thwarting the human vocation to love. In each case, Jesus' response is life-giving. Jesus reveals that the essence of God's being and glory is life-giving love. Jesus constantly offers us the invitation to enter into the dynamic of that love. Using this perspective, the Scripture Readings for this 5th Week in Lent usher us into an experience of epiphany, into scenes of God's self-revelation.

Ezekiel is the prophet who is sent to comfort the people of Israel who have brought destruction on themselves. While the people consider themselves as good as dead, Ezekiel speaks in the name of God who wants to bring them back to life, give them a new heart, and allow them to be enlivened by the divine spirit [Ezekiel 37:1-14].

This promise of the divine spirit leads us directly to our selection from Paul's Letter to the Church at Rome. Paul's talk of flesh and spirit has nothing to do with denigrating the human body or history. Paul is talking about two fundamental orientations in life. One is caught up in the zero-sum perspective that proclaims: "Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps; it's everyone for themselves and there is no free lunch." That is "the flesh" — a fear and avoidance of vulnerability that makes self-protection the No. 1 priority.

In contrast, the perspective of the spirit realizes that no one is either alone or self-sufficient. Instead of being motivated by fear, people who are in the spirit live with the courage-generating assurance that life is a gift and a promise.

Probably the least-noticed words in John's Gospel come from Thomas, who says: "Let us go to die with him." With those words, Thomas proclaimed the very same faith that Mary and Martha professed about Jesus as the resurrection and the life. Thomas was telling his companions that living in fear was truly a dead end. That awareness opened them to new dimensions of life, to the Spirit of Christ who would lead them beyond their greatest imaginings. Thomas' decision to accompany Jesus put into action the faith described in all the dialogue that was to come about the resurrection and the life.

When we pay attention to Thomas in this Gospel scene, we get the idea that he had received new life — just as did Lazarus. Jesus raised Lazarus and comforted his sisters. In doing so, he confronted and thoroughly undermined the powers of death. When Thomas said that he would follow Jesus in spite of the danger of death, he made the same declaration that we make each time we say: "Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free."

The Scripture Readings for this 5th Week in Lent urge us to practice living faith, to allow the Spirit of Christ to free us from any fear that focuses us on our own well-being as if it could be separated from that of others. Through the power of Christ's Spirit working in us, we are called to confront and undermine the powers of sin and death. Being caught up in the dynamic of loving, we can witness to the glory of our life-giving God who does not send suffering but accompanies us in it through one another.

Let us strive to be with Thomas and keep saying: "Let us go with him."

—taken from the writings of Sister Mary McGlone, C.S.J., which appears on the internet

The evening before I pronounced my vows in the Jesuits, I was praying in the chapel, and I was trying to be honest about my fears of doing this. What I came to was my simple words: "Jesus, I will follow you, but just don't hurt me, okay?" Being a believer is not an easy way out. Lazarus got his "wake-up call" to come back into the human experience for a while. Jesus is Himself, heading for a big hurt in Jerusalem. Those who believe do so despite their desires to avoid the hurts of being human.

Jesus does offer Himself as The Resurrection and after our praying for faith, we will be invited by the liturgy and our living out our belief, to follow Him wherever our human pains of hurt and loss take us. He promises to be with us and breathing new life back into our personal "Bonehouse".

—taken from the writings of Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

A GOD WHO WEEPS WITH US:

It strikes me every time I read the story of Lazarus' resurrection. Of all the amazing and surprising things to occur in John's Gospel — dead man walking! — it is this small detail that never fails to catch my eye, never fails to compel me and confound me....Jesus cried!

Why did Jesus weep? He knows the ending of the story. He knows Lazarus will be raised. So why does he weep?

Several years ago, I suffered a miscarriage. It was very early in the pregnancy, and so the news came to our older children all at once — there was a baby, and now the baby is gone. They understood, and they did not understand. They nodded wisely at our words, accepting the information, absorbing it, wrapping their minds around this blessing-become-loss. They held the idea of a younger sibling in their mind, turning it over and inspecting it — I saw this in their eyes — and they did not know quite what to do with such a thing as great happiness that becomes great sorrow. Do any of us, really?

We still talk often about the baby that we lost — Julian, we named him — and he is a presence in their minds that makes himself known whenever we confront the subjects of suffering, pain, sadness, and loss. "Why did God want Julian to die?" my daughter asked me recently, and I hastened to explain that God did not want Julian to die.

"But why wasn't he born, then?" she asked, shaking her head in confusion. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" [John 11:1-45]. Both Martha and Mary say this to Jesus when he comes to them in their grief. They don't say it as reproach, but as testimony — their faith is great that, had Jesus been present, he would not have stood by and watched his friend suffer, and done nothing.

But Jesus was not there. He delayed in the place where he was, and Lazarus died, and now Martha and Mary have to face a future of uncertainty without the protection and companionship of their brother. And when at last Jesus finally comes to Bethany, the sisters kneel before him and reaffirm their faith in Jesus' love for them and in his power over life and death. And they accept that this was a power he did not use for their benefit, even though he could have. They accept their suffering.

The women had no expectations. We see that over and over again — they believe clearly that Jesus can bring their brother back, but they don't dare to dream that he will. "If you had been here," they say. If you had been here. If you had been here.

And Jesus wept — as if to say: "I am here now."

Any suffering that we offer to God, he will sit with us and weep over. And he will accept our offering and take it and transform it from a meaningless pain into a force for good. He most often does this in ways we cannot see and cannot know — not here on earth, and not all at once. We could not bear the knowledge. It would be too much.

So, we understand, but we do not understand.



I could not tell my daughter why Julian was not born. As human beings, we are handicapped by our earthly comprehension of power. If God has the ability to make something easy, we say, then why doesn't he do it? If God can prevent pain, isn't it awful of him not to? And in fact, doesn't that redirect the blame for every misfortune, every loss, every evil in this world to the feet of the One who could have kept it all from happening in the first place?

God can do anything. Can't he make a world where we don't suffer?

But my friends, he has. And he has invited us there. And until we can go, he will sit with us in this world — this broken, sinful, dying world — and he will weep.

—taken from the writings of —Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman, which appear on the internet

HOW ARE WE DEAD?

In March, 1995, Pope St. John Paul II published an encyclical letter entitled: *Evangelium Vitae* — the Gospel of Life. In it he decried the fact that our world is permeated by what he called a culture of death.

We have only to go to the news broadcasts on TV or to our daily papers to verify what the Holy Father is saying — genocide in the Sudan; unending wars in the middle East; the war in Ukraine; homicides and mass shootings throughout our country. We seek to solve so many of our problems by violence and death. Abortion for unwanted babies and neglect or outright euthanasia for unwanted elderly who are ill; capital punishment for the worst criminals; to say nothing of the ongoing international issues which we all confront. Do we have a culture of death? As a minimum, we all have to admit that we have a culture saturated with violence.

Would you say I'm pessimistic? Actually, I'm not. I really tend to be rather optimistic in my outlook on life. And do you want to know why? Because I believe the Gospel. I believe the good news that Jesus came to preach, and I believe in the good things that he did, and the love he poured out on all of us.

Two weeks ago, we heard about the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. Jesus gave her living water to slake her thirst [John 4:5-42]. Last week, we heard about the man born blind. Jesus gave him his sight [John 9:1-41]. On these Weekends, the Liturgy challenged us to ask ourselves: "How do we thirst? How are we blind?" Now we are challenged to ask ourselves: "How are we dead in this culture of death?" And we are challenged to see how in Jesus' response to death we can see how our culture of death can be changed to a Gospel of Life.

On this 5th Week in Lent, we meet a dear friend of Jesus — his name is Lazarus. The name Lazarus means "helpless." Perhaps like the Samaritan woman, like the blind man, he, too, stands for all of us — thirsty, blind, and helpless. But this man is really helpless. He's dead, in his tomb, rotting away. And in that tomb, he is completely bound up, according to the burial custom of the times — cords around his arms and legs, two stones over his eyes, his mouth gagged, a cloth around his head, lifeless in a tomb with a stone in front and the smell of decay inside.

Does Lazarus stand for all of us? Is humankind in this culture of death like Lazarus, helpless, frustrated, bound up, smelly, decaying, blind, deaf — dead? Well, that's how Jesus found his friend — that helpless man, a man he had loved so much. And when he stood at Lazarus' tomb he wept — he wept bitterly. The people saw and said: "Look, see how he loved him!"

Jesus said: "Roll that stone away." But Lazarus' sister said: "Don't roll that stone away. Leave things as they are. The smell would be unbearable." Are we ever like that? Do we say: "Leave things as they are? Let's not touch this or that issue. It might explode



was blind that day — more blind than that beggar, seeing neither spring nor the resurrection. What I was seeing were only those things that reflected what was going on inside my own heart.

Christ is risen, though we might not see him! We don't always notice spring. The miraculous doesn't force itself on us. It's there, there to be seen, but whether we see or not, and what precisely we do see, depends mainly upon what's going on inside our own hearts.

—taken from the writings of Father Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., which appear on the internet.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	Daniel 13:1-62, John 8:1-11
Tuesday:	Numbers 21:4-9, John 8:21-30
Wednesday:	Daniel 3:14-95, John 8:31-42
Thursday:	Genesis 17:3-9, John 8:51-59
Friday:	Jeremiah 20:10-13, John 10:31-42
Saturday:	Ezekiel 37:21-28, John 11:45-56
Palm Sunday:	Matthew 21:1-11, Isaiah 50:4-7, Philippians 2:6-11, Matthew 26:14-27:66

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — APRIL 15th:

Our Savior Lutheran Church, across the street from Gilmour, has a Food Pantry which distributes food to the community on **the third Saturday of each month**. They welcome volunteers. If you want to volunteer, they have instituted some **new procedures** because of the Coronavirus. **Thus they help pre-pack nonperishables in bags on Thursday evening beginning at 5 PM.** They continue this prepacking on Friday if needed. Check with Elina Gurney on this. **On Saturday morning at 9 AM, they need help putting items from the foodbank into the prepacked bags.** Only volunteers will be allowed in the Church building, so you will be protected against the virus. Clients will remain outside in their cars. **The food pantry is then open from 9:30 AM—1:30 PM on Saturday.**

Our Savior Lutheran's Food Pantry was formed to serve those in emergency situations and/or with on-going need in the cities of Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Highland Heights and Gates Mills. The Food Pantry respects social and cultural diversity and upholds the worth and dignity of those it serves. All those in the area with need will be served equally, as supplies allow. The food pantry is a member of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

Please let Elina Gurney know if you would like to help. You can do this through the chapel office [440-473-3560] or by emailing Elina Gurney at gurney.oh@gmail.com. This is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

Father John is available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you. Please call him [440-473-3560] to arrange for this experience. All social distancing will remain in place. Always remember the Lord's invitation: "I will give them a heart with which to understand that I am the Lord. They shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart" [Jeremiah 24:7].



SEEING THE RESURRECTION:

God never overpowers, never twists arms, never pushes your face into something so as to take away your freedom. God respects our freedom and is never a coercive force. And nowhere is this more true than in what is revealed in the resurrection of Jesus. The Gospels assure us that, like his birth, the resurrection was physical and real — not just some alteration inside the consciousness of believers. After the resurrection, we are assured, Jesus' tomb was empty, people could touch him, he ate food with them, he was not a ghost.

But his rising from the dead was not a brute slap in the face to his critics — a non-negotiable fact that left sceptics with nothing to say. The resurrection didn't make a big splash. It was not some spectacular event that exploded into the world as the highlight on the evening news. It had the same dynamics as the incarnation itself — after he rose from the dead, Jesus was seen by some, but not by others; understood by some, but not by others [see Mark 16]. Some got his meaning, and it changed their lives; others were indifferent to him, and still others understood what had happened, hardened their hearts against it, and tried to destroy its truth.

Notice how this parallels, almost perfectly, what happened at the birth of Jesus — the baby was real, not a ghost, but he was seen by some, but not by others and the event was understood by some but not by others. Some got its meaning and it changed their lives, others were indifferent and their lives went on as before, while still others — like Herod — sensed its meaning but hardened their hearts against it and tried to destroy the child.

Why the difference? What makes some see the resurrection while others do not? What allows some understand the mystery and embrace it, while others are left in indifference or hatred?

Hugo of St. Victor used to say: "Love is the eye!" When we look at anything through the eyes of love, we see correctly, understand, and properly appropriate its mystery. The reverse is also true. When we look at anything through eyes that are jaded, cynical, jealous, or bitter, we will not see correctly, will not understand, and will not properly appropriate its mystery.

We see this in how the Gospel of John describes the events of Easter Sunday. Jesus has risen, but, first of all, only the person who is driven by love — Mary Magdala — goes out in search of him [see John 20:16]. The others remain as they are, locked inside their own worlds. But love seeks out its beloved and Mary Magdala goes out, spices in hand, wanting at least to embalm his dead body. She finds his grave empty and runs back to Peter and the beloved disciple and tells them the tomb is empty. The two race off together, towards the tomb, but the disciple whom Jesus loved out-runs Peter and gets to the tomb first, but he doesn't enter, he waits for Peter — authority — to go in first.

Peter enters the empty tomb, sees the linens that had covered the body of Jesus, but does not understand. Then the beloved disciple, love, enters. He sees and he does understand. Love grasps the mystery. Love is the eye. It is what lets us see and understand the resurrection.

That is why, after the resurrection, some saw Jesus, but others did not. Some understood the resurrection while others did not. Those with the eyes of love saw and understood. Those without the eyes of love either didn't see anything or were perplexed or upset by what they did see.

There are lots of ways to be blind. I remember an Easter Sunday some years ago when I was a young graduate student in San Francisco. Easter Sunday was late that year, and it was a spectacularly beautiful spring day. But on that particular day, I was mostly blind to what was around me. I was young, homesick, alone on Easter Sunday, and nursing a huge heartache. That colored everything I was seeing and feeling. It was Easter Sunday, in spring, in high sunshine; but, for what I was seeing, it might as well have been midnight, on Good Friday, in the dead of winter.

Lonely and nursing a heartache, I took a walk to calm my restlessness. At the entrance of a park, I saw a blind beggar holding a sign that read: "It's spring and I'm blind!" The irony wasn't lost on me. I



in our faces." Indeed we even say: "Let's not open a can of worms." But Jesus was opening a tomb of worms.

Jesus said: "Roll that stone away." And then he called: "Lazarus," and he commanded: "Come out!" And that dead man came out and started to live.

Jesus wants to do for us and for all humanity, what he did for that dead man. He wants us to live, and he gives us the gift of life. That's at least one of the lessons of today. Jesus also gives us hope as we hear in his dialogue with Martha when he says: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, in spite of death, will live, and everyone who believes in me will never die." In John's Gospel, image and symbol are very important. Lazarus is bound. When he comes forth at the command of Jesus, Jesus says: "Unbind him and let him go free."

Jesus wants to do for all of us and for the whole world, what he did for Lazarus, for the blind man, for the Samaritan woman. Dear friends, we are all the Samaritan woman. We are all thirsting; perhaps we do not know for what — perhaps it's for meaning in our lives, or just more than we experience right now. Jesus wants to give us the living water that will satisfy our thirst.

We are all the man born blind — the beggar by the side of the road. Jesus wants to open our eyes so that we can see him everywhere. We are all Lazarus, and Jesus want us to live. He wants to set us free to live the new life that he has in fact already given us, to live it with joy and with enthusiasm, knowing that we have been called by God to something splendid beyond words. Knowing this Gospel of Life, living it, will surely be an antidote to the culture of death that Pope John Paul decried.

So let's step out of the tomb. Let's take the bonds from our arms and legs. Let's remove the stone from our eyes, and take the cotton out of our ears and mouth, and live — live, with him and with one another.

—taken from the writings of Father Leo Murray, S.J., which appear on the internet

THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING:

The Cloud of Unknowing is a 14th century text on contemplative prayer. In it, the author of is always saying that you've got to balance your knowing with a willingness not to know. The mind of itself is incapable of wisdom. It's only at an experiential level of existence that we know something, but that knowing is not subject to telling. I think that's why we don't like it. It gives us no ego rewards. We can't prove it. We can't measure it. We can't convince anyone else that we're right.

What the author says is that first we have to enter the Cloud of Forgetting in order to forget all our certitudes, all our labels, all our explanations — just forget them! They are all a waste of time. They are nothing but our ego projecting itself and announcing itself. It has nothing to do with objective reality. If the world doesn't learn this kind of humility — what we're calling beginner's mind — I think we're in trouble. And we're seeing it at the highest levels — the absolute arrogance of "knowing" and of being convinced we do know and no one else knows like we know. To think the United States has often been willing to stand alone against all the other nations of the world. We're so convinced that we know, it's frightening.

The author of *The Cloud* teaches that after we enter into the Cloud of Forgetting — letting go of our hurts and our labels — then we must go into the Cloud of Unknowing, where we actually don't need to label anymore; we don't need to know that we know. I think the biblical word for that — and hear it now in whole new way — is faith. Many of us have heard that word ever since we were children. That's why Jesus idealizes faith so much, and congratulates people who have it. It's this willingness to live with a certain degree of humility.

When the ego invests itself in its knowing, it is convinced that it has the whole picture. At that point, growth stops. The journey stops. Nothing new is going to happen to us after that point. The term we're using here — "beginner's mind" — comes from Buddhism. For Buddhists, it seems to refer to an urgent need to remain open, forever a student. A beginner's mind always says: "I'm a learner. I've got more to learn." It has to do with humility before reality, and never assuming that I understand. If there are fifty thousand levels of the mystery, maybe I'm at level forty-five. Maybe there's more that needs to show itself to me. Can you imagine what a different world it would be if we all lived with that kind of humility?

—taken from the writings of Father Richard Rhor, O.F.M., which appear on the internet

THE NEED TO SURRENDER:

The most important thing that happens in this long passage from the gospel of John is what Martha learns about life. Martha knew Jesus and loved Jesus, yet Martha looks for life in the wrong place. She imagines that life is going to be available to her brother, Lazarus, in the future. She says: "I know my brother will rise again at the resurrection on the last day". Jesus challenges her. He says: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even if they die shall live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" [John 11:1-45].

Jesus proclaims: "I am life, and I am now. The deepest part of life is available to you now. Not just physical life, but the most important things of life. Your own dignity as a person is available to you now. Peace is available now. Joy is available now. It flows from your status as a child of God. It flows from your relationship with me."

I do not believe there is a more difficult or challenging passage in the Scriptures than this assertion by Jesus: that today, now, we have access to life, to joy, and to peace in his presence. We are all so much like Martha — we postpone life to some future time, to a time when we have met the conditions that we think are necessary in order to have life. We imagine that life will happen once we have attained a certain success or once we have corrected what is wrong in our life. Then, in that future, we suppose we will have life. Like Martha we say to ourselves: "Life will happen once I graduate from college, once I get married, once I stop smoking, once I retire, once I lose twenty pounds, once I make enough money, once I have the right kind of friends, once I get over this cold, once spring comes." Whatever conditions we imagine, those conditions move life away from us. Jesus insists that we are mistaken. Life in its deepest sense does not result from anything we do or fail to do. Life happens when we surrender, when we surrender to Christ and God's love for us which is available to us in this moment.

We keep thinking that life in its' deepest sense is about us and our accomplishments. The shocking thing that Jesus tells us in today's gospel is that your life is not about you — you are about life! Real life is available to you the moment that you accept God's love which is freely given to you as a son or daughter of God, available to you in this moment. To the extent that we are able to open ourselves to that present free gift of love we can experience life and peace and joy. To the extent that we place conditions on that gift, we push life into to the future — a future which we will never reach.

Of course, the things we do have some importance. We must earn a living, we must get an education, we probably should lose twenty pounds. But the minute we think that these conditions, these goals that we set for ourselves, are what is going to bring us life and peace and joy, in that moment we begin a futile and useless chase. Life comes when we surrender, when we accept God's free love for us in this moment, when we claim our status as sons and daughters and begin to live out of the relationship which is God's free gift to us.

In the 1950's a famous millionaire held an exclusive dinner party in which he invited two famous people. One of them was the brilliant British actor, Richard Burton. The other was Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, who was a religious leader, famous for his preaching of the gospel in the modern media. As a gift to his guests that evening, the millionaire asked both men to prepare and to read the 23rd psalm — probably the most famous of all the psalms: "the Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want". Richard Burton spoke first. He took up the text and he proclaimed it with conviction, insight, and drama, using all of his professional skills. At the end of that reading the guests were so moved that they jumped to their feet and burst into applause. When the applause died down, Bishop Sheen took up the same text, and he read it with humility, conviction and faith. When he was finished, there was absolute silence. Finally, the host stood up and thanked both men for there readings. He then said to his guests: "If I had



become dependent on drugs, or they have given in to porn to such an extent that they are thoroughly addicted, seeing their lives dissolve around them. They may feel that there is no hope. But if they listen, they can hear the voice of the Lord, calling them, saying: "Come out of that tomb." And with the Lord they can walk once more into the light.

Another tomb that many people find themselves in is the tomb they construct with their anger. One of my favorite cartoon strips, *A Rose Is A Rose*, presented this brilliantly. In the first panel we come upon Rose, chained to the wall in a prison cell. She is all bent over. She is frowning. In the second panel, she stands up and starts unlocking her chains. In the third panel, she is in her living room, where her husband, Jimbo, is sitting on a couch watching TV. Rose says to him: "I've decided to forgive you." In the last panel, she is dancing in a flower bed. So many people, so many of us, are in tombs along with Rose in the first panel. We are angry because someone has done us dirty. We hold grudges. You know what a grudge is, right? A grudge is poison we take hoping that another person will die. One lady told me: "I don't care what you say, Father, I'm taking this to the grave." To which I can only say: "Well, that'll fix him." Look, Jesus calls us out of the tomb of anger. He does this by calling us to forgive. He told us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."



When Jesus came to the tomb where that dear friend of his had been lain, he wept. That is the shortest verse in scripture. Jesus wept. He wept at what death did to the man he loved. He weeps at what death is doing to us. He does not want us in tombs — whether they are tombs others put us into or tombs we create for ourselves. Jesus calls us out of the tombs. He calls us into the beauty of His world.

We have to take the step. We have to decide to leave that which is destroying us and walk out of the tomb. This walk might be difficult. We might have to walk despite the burial clothes tied around us. "Unbind him," Jesus said to those standing with Him after Lazarus stumbled out of the tomb. "Unbind Him," the Lord says to the Christian community whenever anyone takes those first uncertain steps into the light. "Unbind Him," the Lord says to all around us. We recognize our frailty, and allow others to care for us, as we are called to care for them.

"Lazarus come out!" Come out. You and I do not belong in cold dark tombs. We belong in the light. We belong dancing in the flowers with the Lord of Life.

In two weeks, we will be celebrating Easter. We will be celebrating because the One who is the Lord of Life has called us to come out into the Fullness of His Life.

—taken from the writings for Monsignor Joseph Pellegrino, which appear on the internet

CHAPEL ENVELOPES:

There are many ways that you can support our Holy Cross Mission and support Our Lady Chapel. You can place your offering at the door of the chapel as you enter; you can use our on-line donation link; or you can mail in your offerings to the Chapel itself — whatever best serves your needs. If you need a supply of envelopes, please pick them up off the table in the Narthex of the Chapel when you come to Mass. Or you can call the office or stop in to request them. **If you would like us to send you a supply of envelopes, please call Father John or Patty at [473-3560], and we will get them right out to you..**

WEEKLY OFFERING:

Thank you to those who have begun to send in weekly offerings. We really appreciate it. Thanks for not forgetting about us.

Offerings-----[Saturday, March 18]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 1,150.00

Offerings-----[Sunday, March 19]----- \$ 231.00

Matthew 26:38 and Mark 14:34]. There is no equivalent in the Passion according to St. John.

But maybe we might not be totally misguided in seeing the same reality in that famously short verse: “Jesus wept” [see John 11:35]. The bystanders recognized the depths of his grief for his dead friend and the bereaved sisters. But sorrow at the death of another is never isolated from sorrow at the prospect of one’s own inevitable passing. In John’s Gospel, Jesus always knows what is coming. The death of Lazarus furnishes the perfect opportunity for Jesus to react to the suffering and death that lies ahead for him.

We read that Jesus was still “perturbed” when he arrived at the tomb. Lazarus, meanwhile, was in the depths of the grave. Jesus summoned him, fulfilling in a spectacular way the prophecy of Ezekiel [See Ezekiel 37:1-14].

Let us return for a moment to Psalm 130. We don’t know exactly what depths of suffering the psalmist was experiencing, but we do know that he/she didn’t simply wallow in it. “Out of the depths” he/she cried — but to the Lord in faith.

In the light of all this, we return, finally, to Jesus’ words to Martha: “Whoever believes in me, even if they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” Suddenly it all makes sense if we look at Lazarus. After Jesus raised him, he died again at some later date. But death no longer had a hold on him.

Jesus does not deliver us from dying. That is part of the human condition, which he also shared. But he does deliver us from death — that is from death’s ultimate, absolute power. Death shall have no dominion.

Do you believe this? —taken from the writings of Father René Butler, S.M., which appear on the internet

CALLED OUT OF THE TOMB:

“Lazarus come out from that tomb!” We all need to come out of the tombs we find ourselves in — whether we put ourselves in those tombs or we were put into the tombs by circumstances beyond our control.

There are also real tombs from which the Lord calls us. There is the tomb that we are in due to our very existence as human beings. What the ancient sages were very aware of this condition. In the Book of Genesis we read of “The Fall of Man” [see Genesis 3] — how mankind would rather push God aside, and lose himself and herself in the material world than listen to God, and keep Him in the center their life. Mankind turned from the Lord of Life.

Turning away from life is turning to death. This was not God’s plan for us. He did not want us to die. He did not want our bodies to decay, as they do in tombs. He wanted us to have a full share in His Life. Think about the Assumption of Mary — that solemnity we celebrate on August 15th. Mary was created without sin, always enjoying the spiritual life. When her life on earth was over, her body was not put into a tomb to decay. She was united body and soul to God. That was what God wanted for all of us. He sent his son — the Word, Jesus the Christ — to restore our spiritual lives. Jesus calls us out of the tomb from the cross.

Many people are in tombs due to no choice of their own. They have a serious medical condition that greatly limits what they can do. Maybe they have cancer, or heart problems, emphysema or kidney problems. Or maybe they are suffering from pneumonia caused by the flu or the corona virus. Jesus is calling them — calling us all — out of the tombs that sickness puts us in. Jesus doesn’t want people to be sick. He healed people during his earthly ministry. He still heals people, heals us. He calls us out of the tomb of sickness to be united to Him. As a priest, I have brought the sacraments to people in the last moments of their lives. Many have said to me: “I am going to be alright, Father. I might die, but I am going to be alright.” The voice of the Lord calls us outside of our sick rooms — calls us to know that if we walk to Him, we will have life. No sickness can take the Lord away from us.

Some people are in tombs of their own making. They have experimented with substance abuse and

to summarize what took place here tonight, it would be this: Mr. Burton knew the psalm, but Bishop Sheen knew the Shepherd.”

The secret to life is to know the Shepherd, to know the unconditional love that God gives to each one of us regardless of our achievements or our failures. Accept that love. Live out of that relationship. Do not postpone life to some future time, placing conditions upon it which you imagine you must meet. God loves you now. God loves you in this moment. Surrender!

—taken from the writings of Father George Smiga, which appear on the internet.

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

This weekend, we celebrate the fifth and final Sunday before Holy Week. We still have two weeks to make this the Best Lent Ever. Here’s the question: If you died today, what would you wish you had done differently? In his book, *Resisting Happiness*, Matthew Kelly observes: “If you went to the doctor and she told you that you only have six months to live, you would live the next six months very differently than you were planning.” He adds: “Most people get no warning. They are alive one minute and dead the next.”

As we listen in John’s Gospel about the death of Lazarus [John 11:1-45], it’s good to ask what you and I would do differently in light of our own inevitable death. Matthew Kelly interviewed hospice nurses concerning what dying people talk about. Here are 3 of the responses:

- I wish I had loved more.
- I wish I hadn’t spent so much time chasing the wrong things.
- I wish I had thought about life’s big questions earlier.

In John’s Gospel, Martha asks a tough question. In grief over her brother’s death she asks about Jesus’ absence — “If you had been here my brother would not have died.” Jesus speaks to her about the future resurrection. For Martha that seems distant. Jesus then gives her the great revelation: “I am the resurrection and the life.” In other words: resurrection, eternal life is nothing more — and nothing less — than a relationship with Jesus. That relationship begins here and continues in heaven.

To believe in Jesus, to have a relationship with him, means more than intellectual assent — and it means more than a one-time acceptance. It’s an immersion in Christ. St. Paul says that if we die with Christ in baptism we will rise with him to new life [see Romans 6:3-5]. Jesus for his part speaks about eating his body and drinking his blood in order to have eternal life [see John 6:53-54].

Take note of Jesus’ relationship with Lazarus — He stays in Lazarus’ home. He loves him and his two sisters. He refers to Lazarus as “our friend.” Standing before Lazarus’ tomb Jesus weeps. “See how he loved him,” the people say. And Jesus says: “Lazarus, come out!”

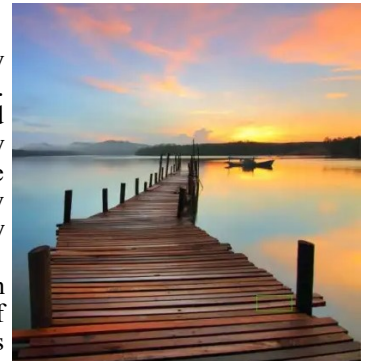
With the example of Lazarus I invite you to put into practice what we’ve been talking about this Lent. You need a time of silence — ten minutes, maybe more, maybe less which leads to a daily relationship with Jesus. Invite him into your home — your life. If you and I were to die today, that’s the one thing that would matter.

—taken from the writings of Father Phil Bloom., which appear on the internet

HUMAN DIGNITY:

Every human person is sacred and inviolable. To ensure that a society has a future, it is necessary that a sense of respect be matured for the dignity of every person, no matter in what condition they find themselves. Chosen and loved by God, we are called to live “as is fitting among the saints” [see Ephesians 5:3], to clothe ourselves with sentiments of goodness, humility, magnanimity, bearing the fruits of the Spirit.

—Pope Francis



HAVE YOU EVER FELT *REALLY* GUILTY?

Have you ever felt guilty? Really guilty? You wouldn't be a Christian if you haven't. Judas felt really guilty. Peter felt really guilty, too. Both of them were apostles. Both of them betrayed Jesus — one for money, one out of fear. How they handled their guilt, however, was quite different.

Judas was so overcome by what he had done that he could not believe in God's mercy, and he hanged himself [Matthew 27:3-5]. Peter was also overcome by what he had done, but he returned to God in repentance — demonstrated in the bitter tears that he cried over how he had abandoned Jesus [Mark 14:72].

For a lot of people, the season of Lent is about guilt. That's too bad — nothing could be further from the truth. Now, Lent CAN cause us to become very aware of our selfishness and sinfulness, and that can be a good thing — especially if we focus too much on ourselves most of the year. If we're not careful, though, focusing only on the negative can cause a problem. Guilt does not come from God, but from within. And God doesn't want us to feel guilt. Read what the prophet Ezekiel writes: "Turn and be converted from all your crimes, that they may be no cause of guilt in you" [Ezekiel 18:30].

Sometimes while we're busy focusing on all of the places that we fall and fail, we lose sight of what Lent is really about — it's about rebirth. The word "Lent" actually means: "Spring". Why spring? Well, basically, because it is about death becoming life.

If we let ourselves focus only on our sins and on our failings, we are losing sight of the bigger picture. The devil wants us to get so stuck and so caught up in our guilt that we don't look beyond it. God, however, is calling us to look beyond the death [Good Friday] and towards life [Easter Sunday]. Lent began with Ash Wednesday — this past week — the ashes reminding us of the fact that our bodies were originally created from nothing, and will, at some point, return to the earth. Our physical existence on this earth — our body — is temporary, but our spiritual existence — our soul — well, our souls are forever.

Think about that. Think about that long and hard. Which are you living for right now — your body or your soul? That really makes me think — and I hope it made you think, too

Lent, then, is more than a "church season" — it is a journey from death to life. It is a journey designed to help us repent in very real ways. Remember, to "repent" means to 'turn AWAY from one thing and turn TOWARDS something else' — that means to turn away from anything and everything that leads me away from God, and turn my full attention back to my Creator — my Lord.

During the forty days of Lent, we are called to become more aware of God — to make concrete decisions that will help us live better lives, to gain the strength to leave behind things that draw us away from God, and to prepare ourselves to live, daily, as better Catholic Christians, as better sons and daughters, friends and co-workers, husbands and wives.

The ashes on Ash Wednesday are not to be seen as a sign of how horrible we are — or as a sign of guilt — but of humility. It's not just a solemn reminder that we are sinners, but it's an outward invitation to renew ourselves — to turn our whole selves and whole lives back to God. So wear them proudly as a sign that you are active in your faith walk.

Those ashes are not some weird, outdated custom — they are you admitting that you are not perfect — but at least you're trying to get better. They are a sign that you believe in God and are willing and wanting to get to know Him more deeply. They are a sign that no matter what others might say, you are proud to claim your God in today's culture — knowing and trusting that He is proud to claim YOU as one of His own.

The next forty days of Lent could be the most profound and most powerful days of your life if you let them. Let them be — I dare you.



And I dare you, God — pour down that Spirit — my body might have to return to ashes someday, but my soul — my soul is gearing up for the everlasting party of a lifetime.

Am I excited about Lent? Yes, I'm GUILTY — as charged. It's always just the wake-up call I need. —The Bible Gee

LIFE TEEN and EDGE:

Our Life Teen and EDGE youth group is meeting in-person again. We will meet for an hour beginning at 11:30 AM following our 10 AM Sunday Mass in the Lennon Board Room. If you are unable to join us, there are many resources available for you on the Life Teen website — lifeteen.com. There are numerous blogs and videos for you to connect with. The Life Teen national office continues to release many new programs. **Please contact Father John for more information. And please join us each Sunday for our Mass at 10 AM — in person or live-streamed, and then come to our Life Teen/EDGE gathering after Mass.** And above all, let us continue to join each other in prayer. **Father John is available for you. Please contact him [cell: 216-570-9276].**



DEATH HAS NO DOMINION:

We are faced today with such an embarrassment of riches in the readings, one hardly knows where to begin. It would be interesting to ask each of you what struck you in particular. Let me share what struck me. I begin with the Responsorial Psalm 130: "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord."

Virtually everyone knows what it is like to be swallowed up by the ocean, drowning in what Shakespeare calls "a sea of troubles." It can be the boundless depths of grief, the remorseless depths of misery, the hideous depths of rage, the black depths of fear, the pathless depths of doubt, the icy depths of pain, the cavernous depths of depression and hopelessness, the relentless depths of guilt, the unimagined depths of humiliation, or the insatiable depths of addiction.

There are, of course, other fathomless depths in life — like love and trust and hope. It was from the depths of sorrow and the depths of faith that Martha, and then Mary, reproached Jesus: "Lord, if you had been her, my brother would not have died" [John 11:1-45]. In his encounter with Martha, Jesus challenges her faith — and ours — with an extraordinary claim: "I am the Resurrection and the Life", followed by a bewildering declaration: "Whoever believes in me, even if they die, will love, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." To paraphrase: You won't die, but even if you do die, you won't. Then follows the question: "Do you believe this?"

It would appear that only a believer can hold on to this puzzling truth — even without making perfect sense of it. It isn't Western logic — its faith!

There is no doubt that faith is at the heart of John's Gospel. Before leaving for Bethany, Jesus tells his disciples that he is glad that he didn't save Lazarus from dying — "that you may believe". Then there is the encounter with Martha. Later, at the tomb, Jesus prays aloud to the Father so that the crowd "may believe that you sent me." And the story ends with the words: "Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done, began to believe in him."

Jesus also experienced the depths. On the cross, he cried out in the words of Psalm 22: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" [Psalm 22:1]. And Jesus again experiences the depth in John's Gospel — "Jesus wept".

Matthew, Mark and Luke all describe the scene of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, and in Matthew and Mark, Jesus confides to Peter, James and John that "my soul is sorrowful, even to death" [see

