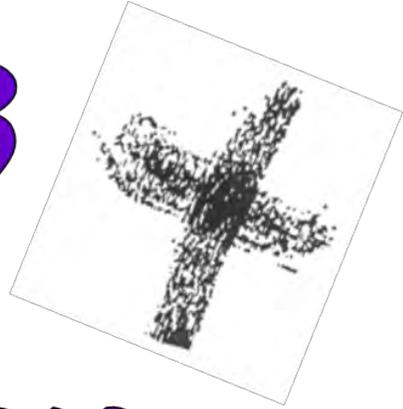


2018



Lenten

Lectionary



Introduction Lent 2018

Have you ever read the “*Forward Day by Day*”? It is an Episcopal Meditation published quarterly and available in the office. There is a Morning Resolve in the front cover; it hasn’t changed in over 40 years! Every time I get my new *Forward*, I read the Resolve, then enjoy reading the daily meditations. And often I will look back at it, until I have it almost memorized.

I will try this day to live a simple, sincere, and serene life, repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, discouragement, impurity, and self-seeking; cultivating cheerfulness, magnanimity, charity, and the habit of holy silence; exercising economy in expenditure, generosity in giving, carefulness in conversation, diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust, and a childlike faith in God.

In particular I will try to be faithful in those habits of prayer, work, study, physical exercise, eating and sleep, which I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me to be right.

And as I cannot in my own strength do this, nor even with a hope of success attempt it, I look to thee, O Lord God my Father, in Jesus my Savior, and ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Different phrases will pop out at me, depending on my life circumstances. For years, as we were struggling with our first house mortgage and two small children, I kept thinking of “*exercising economy in expenditure, generosity in spending*”. It helped Jim and me justify giving generously when we had so little to sustain us. And, of course, we always had enough!

Right now, the phrases are, “*the habit of holy silence*” and “*carefulness in conversation*”. I know God is calling me to watch the words of my mouth, as they reflect the meditations of my heart.

Which phrases pop out at you right now, in this time and space of your life? There is a phrase for every occasion. Getting a little chunky after the holidays? Be faithful to those habits of physical exercise and eating which the Holy Spirit has shown you to be right. Feeling a bit grumpy? Repel promptly those thoughts of discontent or discouragement.

I encourage you to read this resolve each morning during Lent, before reading our St. Timothy’s Lenten Lectionary, and listen to the Holy Spirit. What we can’t do on our own, with God all things are possible.

God’s blessings for a spirit-filled Lent,
Helen Coleman

Editor’s note: These offerings are the gifts of our authors. Please enjoy them, and tell the author about your reactions. As always, our contributors come from all parts of the theological spectrum, and that is a good thing. We each find our path to God, and God loves us exactly how we are.

Thursday, February 15, 2018

Habakkuk 3: 1 – 1-18

Philippians 3: 12 – 21

John 17: 1 – 8

I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. John 17:6

I do believe St. Timothy's unique crucifix exemplifies this message. Next time you're in church, really take a good look at it! The cross represents the horizontal line of the time/space continuum which is the world we are living in – the world of duality. The vertical line represents eternity. The "still point" – the junction between the two – the gateway to the Kingdom of God. Time and Eternity!

Notice how Jesus is standing completely in the vertical dimension with his arms reaching out into the horizontal – beckoning us to follow Him. Jesus is "**in** the world, but not **of** the world" –teaching us in the name of God how to transcend in consciousness. How to realize that "*In God, (Love, Wholeness, Oneness, Joy), we live and move and have our being*", as Paul states. (Acts 17:28)

Each moment offers us the opportunity to awaken to another dimension where everything radiates unconditional love. This vertical dimension is always infusing and informing the horizontal and inviting us to awaken to our spiritual nature. We can also be "*in the world but not of the world*."

So the question is: Do we go to church for consolation or transformation? I believe Jesus is pointing to transformation --- a profound teaching. Perhaps his words have lost the power of their original meaning through endless repetition throughout the years and need to be reborn. What about "time and eternity"? Consider what Paul Tillich, esteemed theologian and author, writes about eternal life:

It is certainly not what popular imagination has made it – escaping from life and being received in heaven in what is badly called "the life hereafter". Eternal life is not continuation of life after death. Eternal life is beyond past, present, and future (time and space). We come from eternal life, we live in its presence, we return to it. It is the divine life in which we are rooted.

Everyone has experienced that moment when the eternal cuts into his world of time – a "Holy Instant" – where we suddenly breach the wall of separation and feel the presence of God. A feeling of elation – oneness with all rushes in. Heaven on earth.

In my mind I see eternity as a large circle drawn around our world of time and space. **It includes and transcends.** It embraces us, calls us – as we play our role of a spiritual being in a physical body. When we pray, we elevate ourselves to the eternal. Eternity is another dimension of consciousness --- not a repetition of our world of time.



Time and Eternity

It's not easy living on this earth,
choosing between angels and devils,
mixing dread with joy in a single day.

I want to hover, just for a moment, in the
vertical dimension beyond the struggle.
Breathe in the silence of now.

Jean Crane

Friday, February 16, 2018

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 18:25-32

Phillipians 4:1-9

John 17:9-19

Being a Christian is hard work. Being level headed in the current political environment is also very hard work. It is so easy to get caught up in the rhetoric and hear only to what you want to hear. In some cases, in my humble opinion, the media is an enabler. I try to get at least some of the information before I make a comment, pass judgement, or ignore it all together. I walked in the Walnut Creek March on January 20 and talked to several people at random. I talked with one man about empathy, which I believe is sorely lacking in many facets of leadership. There were people concerned about Mother Earth, LGBTQ and women's rights, and about the environment of the next generation. These people were looking for equality. My favorite sign of all, which embodies everything to me, was the one held up by one woman that read "Our Children Are Watching". And if you don't believe me, just ask your own children or grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

I am truly blessed to have a wonderful relationship with Thomas. Not long ago, he was upset by something in the news that went to the core of everything he has ever grown up with, learned in school, church, or outside activities. The Washington Post and other news sources reported that the President had called certain countries nasty names and that he wouldn't want people from those countries in the United States. Furthermore, he wants more people immigrating from places like Norway. Thomas found this while looking for his current event assignment. I spent a good half an hour talking with him, reassuring him that he wasn't the one in trouble for finding this, and if he was ever upset about something he found in the news, we could always talk about it. I try not to say too much how I really feel about things at home unless it comes up in discussion. There is a fine line between bestowing my beliefs and clarifying facts. Together we were able just to walk through the facts of that meeting to get that assignment done. I just try to help with gathering information and if I think a behavior is inappropriate, it is my job as a parent to point it out and set the example of proper behavior. Jesus does this frequently!

The passage from **Phillipians** gives me great comfort and reassures me that how I am helping Thomas and me navigate through difficult times is appropriate. It is commendable and honorable to be a good listener to your child (or anyone else). Teenagers don't always ask for help, and when it comes to emotions, that can be even harder to elicit the root of the problem. It is good to work for the rights of others, no matter their background. It is good to pray about these things and give them to God. There was tremendous peace and a thank you from him after we talked.

I wish you the Peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, all the days of your life. You may not feel all it of the time, especially when things are hard. But if what you are doing is pleasing to God, just, pure, any excellence, or worthy of praise from Him, keep on doing it. The God of Peace will be with you.

With love,

Cathy Hager

Saturday, February 17, 2018

Ezekiel 39:21-29

Philippians 4:10-20

John 17:20-26

Let us focus on the readings from Ezekiel and John. As the prophet Ezekiel predicts, the suffering of the Jews will end, and they will return from exile with a renewed commitment to the covenant of The Lord God and a new sense of their unique status as the restored House of Israel. How consoling must God's profound and unilateral forgiveness and promised protection have been to them as they rebuilt their lives from the Babylonian exile... cleansed, restored and favored. The Lord would even pour out his spirit among them (a presence usually reserved for prophets).

The reading from John is the conclusion of Jesus' prayer at the close of the last supper just before Jesus' betrayal and the Passion. While initially an intercession for the Apostles who would have to carry on without the comforting physical presence of their Rabbi, the prayer extends to include all future believers that we may be as one in our faithful discipleship to our Lord. Let us pray that God's promise as stated in Ezekiel be as one with Jesus' prayer as we are the heirs of the second covenant and represent the new Israel... an Israel which exists in ourselves through our belief. Not a physical land of Israel but the holy temple which exists in the spirit of truth which abides in us. Thanks be to God!

Gil Jardine

Monday, February 19, 2018

Genesis 37:1-11: Joseph got a wonderful coat, and his brothers were jealous.

1 Corinthians 1: 1-19: Paul scolds the church for dividing into factions.

Mark 1:1-13: Jesus was baptized, and the dove came down.

I don't know of any family that hasn't had its squabbles. "He took my___." "She won't play fair." "Mom loves me best." Even among adult children, we may hear arguments about politics, values, or ethics. Some families even come to blows over what started as a minor discussion.

Our church is no different. "I like the old prayer book!" "I don't like *those* kind of people worshipping here." "Why did we choose him/her to be bishop?" We all know people who have left the church, thinking that they can never be happy with people who have such disparate views.

It was no different in Paul's time. In Corinth, there were four different factions: those who followed the teachings of Paul, Apollos, Chephas, or Christ. Supposedly members of Chloe's household had written to Paul reporting that there was quarreling among the different factions. The citizens of Corinth, being Greek free thinkers, were used to having great intellectual discussions. But they went too far and were threatening to bring down the Corinthian church with their divisiveness.

Paul didn't insist that everyone start believing the exact same thing. Nor did he insist that someone in authority should tell them what to believe. Instead he insisted on a unity of spirit and purpose that allowed members to learn from one another in love.

Isn't that what we need today, in 2018? We don't need someone to tell us how to think. Nor do we need to split into self-righteous splinter groups, convinced that our way is the only way. We need to listen to each other in love, to really hear where the other person is coming from. We need to choose unity over disunity, discussion over arguments. We need to look for the Christ in our neighbors and let them see the Christ in us. Only then can we say, "I belong to Christ."

Helen Coleman

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

Genesis 37:12-24

1 Corinthians 1:20-31

Mark 1:14-28

As I read the selections today, I could see the thread of God's providence. When I think that He might not be at work in a situation, He is.

As He protected Joseph from the evil plans of his brothers, He will protect us.

In the Gospel, as John the Baptist faced a setback in prison, wondering if the message would continue, God's providence; Jesus, was at work, calling his disciples and advancing the Kingdom - handing out new job descriptions for the fishermen and demonstrating His authority over the visible and invisible realms.

St. Paul's Epistle reminds us of our proper response to God's ultimate display of providence, which was Jesus' sacrifice for us.

Humble surrender.

Christ became righteousness for us; sanctifying us from our sin; and redeeming us from our life of slavery into our true life in Him.

The Epistle also teaches us to be on the lookout - God chooses the lesser, seemingly foolish things for His great purposes. I'm reminded that he opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Father, help us to see You at work today. Help us to pause to ponder things that are often looked over. Help us to give You Glory and to walk close to You today, seeing the world we live in as You see the world. Amen.

Thomas Jajeh

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

Genesis 37:25-36

1 Corinthians 2:1-13

Mark 1:29-45

I would imagine that all the cable news channels would have been abuzz at this point in Jesus's ministry as told in Mark's gospel. Headlines like "Simon's mother in-law cured by man from Nazareth!" and "Jesus heals Galilean Leper!" would have spread like wildfire. I'm sure some reacted with awe and wonder, others with skepticism and fear, while still others with just plain curiosity. Regardless of the reaction, the news was out. For many, there was now hope.

"Everyone is searching for you," implored Simon and Andrew when they found Jesus who had snuck out to a deserted place. People from all over, who had heard the news, now sought out Jesus' healing. Fast forward 2000 years, and it seems like many of may still be searching...searching to be healed.

Since the time of the passage, advances in medicine have certainly created treatments for many sicknesses of the body like fevers or leprosy. But, sicknesses of the soul like anger, greed, loneliness, self-absorption, indifference, hate, prejudice, or intolerance seem to persist today just as they existed 2000 years ago. These sicknesses prevent us from experiencing the love, hope and joy that constantly surrounds us. The good news is there is a cure. The cure is the same today as it was 2000 years ago: seek out Jesus, listen to what He has to say, follow His teachings in our everyday lives.

Unfortunately, even with all our medical advances, there exists no thermometer to accurately measure self-absorption...indifference does not show up on our skin as a rash. Healing the sicknesses of the soul requires self-examination and an internal desire to be cured.

So, as I reflect on this passage, I ask myself...do I see these sicknesses in myself? These sicknesses that prevent me from truly experience the love, joy, and hope that God has created for me? And, even if I do recognize them, do I have the strength and courage to seek the cure, the cure that is right in front of me, the cure that Jesus offers to all?

John Geraci

Thursday, February 22, 2018

Genesis 39:1-23

1 Corinthians 2:14-3:15

Mark 2:1-2

“The LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.” After being taken down to Egypt and bought by Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, because the LORD was with Joseph, Joseph became a successful man, first in the house of his master, and then in prison. In his master’s home, “the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands.” In jail, the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper. Wherever Joseph was, “the LORD was with him and showed him steadfast love”...giving him favor in the sight of others. *I pray, Lord, for faith like Joseph’s, in which You are the source of everything in my life, being always with me and showing me steadfast love, giving me favor in the sight of others. Please help me remember that it is all you, Lord, and thank you for my blessed life.*

“Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else’s scrutiny”...we have the mind of Christ.” God gives the growth. “For we are God’s servants, working together.” The foundation is Jesus Christ. “Fire will test what sort of work each has done.” *I pray Lord that you give me spiritual discernment, that I live from the mind of Christ that dwells in me. Help me discern when I am living from the flesh and behaving according to human inclinations. Help me do the work you have called me to do, during my time on Earth, looking forward to being reunited with you when I die. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your great love of me and others.*

“I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.’ And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this!’” What a beautiful story of a paralyzed man and his four friends, who were unstoppable in having their friend be healed by Jesus. *I pray, Lord that I will be moved like the friends for others to be healed and that I will surrender to your power of forgiveness and healing. Please let me be a vehicle for your forgiving and healing spirit in my life, this Lenten season.*

Through Your spirit, residing in me, precious Jesus, all things are possible. Let me keep my focus on surrendering to your spirit in all parts of my life. Amen

Peg Miller

Friday, February 23, 2018

Genesis 40:1-23
1 Corinthians 3:16-
Mark 2:13-22

In Mark's gospel today, Jesus has us relate to what it means for us to own or become something new, and at the same time forever getting rid of the old. He helps us understand what this means by comparing it to being healed when we are sick. We don't choose to be sick, and of course we don't want to hold onto a little bit of that cough, wound, or broken bone; we want it gone so that we can get back to being well. That's an easy one. But how easy is it for us, who are supposedly well, to fall into temptations that separate us from what God wants us to be? And what about trying to hold onto that beat-up pair of shoes, or that old non-stick fry pan, or the old sofa, or tennis racket, or old [fill in the blank]? They (and we) haven't totally disintegrated; never mind that water leaks into the shoes, everything sticks to the pan, the sofa has seen multiple generations of dogs that claimed it as their bed, and the tennis racket is better at beating the dust out of rugs. And maybe we're just a little bit sinful, still largely on God's "good side." But by having us hear this gospel every two years, we are challenged to abandon those once-new-but-now-aging wine skins, be they real or metaphorical, and replace them with new ones that will hopefully sustain us for another two years. And because we are human, two years is about the most we can get by before we need to hear this again.

Gary and I are sorting through decades of things we have accumulated, and it is hard to actually let go of things that are still useful to us here in northern California but will feel like dead weight if we lug it all to Arizona later this year. Are we really prepared to trust that we won't need these things? Might we kick ourselves that we gave away those bulky wool sweaters when Phoenix experiences a 100-year snowstorm the first winter we get there?

I leave with a question: why is it so hard to get rid of stuff that we don't need, or even stuff that isn't even useful anymore?

Susan Cyr

Saturday, February 24, 2018

Genesis 41:1-13

1 Corinthians 4:1-7

Mark 2:23-3:6

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. Mark 3:1-5

In our era, helping others in need and taking breaks is something rare to see. In Mark's version of this story, Jesus is telling us that doing right on the Sabbath day isn't bad. We don't *just* have to worship, we can help others, relax, and or pray. The Pharisees and Herodians were plotting to destroy Jesus because he wanted to help a man who had a withered hand, and even though they didn't agree with it, Jesus still helped the man because it was the right thing to do. This shows us that even though people did not agree with helping people on the Sabbath, we still should because it's the right thing to do.

-Skylar Puckett

Monday, February 26, 2018

Genesis 41:46-57

1 Corinthians 4:8-21

Mark 3:7-19

Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Quite apart from us you have become kings! Indeed, I wish that you had become kings, so that we might be kings with you! For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day. I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me. For this reason I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach them everywhere in every church. But some of you, thinking that I am not coming to you, have become arrogant. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. For the kingdom of God depends not on talk but on power. What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick, or with love in a spirit of gentleness? | Corinthians 4:8-21

The Corinthians apparently thought they had arrived, and Paul is telling them they had the wrong destination in mind. While Paul is quite pointed in comparing the poverty and homelessness of the apostles with the affluence of the Corinthians, he is more gentle in describing the humility of the apostles. This passage undoubtedly holds a message for the larger church and world, but it also holds something for me.

I love to come to Saint Timothy's on Sunday for worship; I love the ritual, the music, receiving the sacrament. When I leave, I feel so holy, and (dare I say) righteous...ouch. That, and the fact that I come well-fed and in unpatched, clean clothing puts me in cahoots with the Corinthians. If that is enough for the rest of the week, then I am indeed quite poor, and likely to meet Jesus with the rod rather than the gentle loving attitude. How do I shed that holy, righteous feeling, so that my actions the rest of the week allow me to act with the apostles in living the gospel? What brings me back to this messy world is the Post Eucharistic Prayer. It is a recognition that my holy feeling is not from my own actions...it is a gift from God; a gift that I am supposed to multiply by taking it out into the world and giving it to others in whatever form they need. It may be food and clothing...it may be a smile and a kind word...it may be holding a door...it may be a silent blessing.

Note: My favorite part of this passage is that Paul sent Timothy to the Corinthians to remind them about the ways of Jesus. Timothy is here.

Gloria Rousseau

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

Genesis 42:1-17

1 Corinthians 5:1-8

Mark 3:19-35

“Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened...Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”—1 Corinthians 6-8

As a baker, I've always had trouble with these verses from 1 Corinthians. Doesn't Paul know how delicious fresh bread or cinnamon rolls are? Yeast is a *good* thing! That little bit of yeast, mixed with warm water, sugar, and gluten, will cause the loaf of bread to rise to double its size. The airiness of the loaf is caused by that little bit of yeast.

But let's think about the yeast analogy. A small amount will puff up the dough. A small amount of pride will puff up a man. The fermented yeast in sourdough bread will flavor the entire bread (and for me, not in a good way, as I HATE sourdough bread). The mold will continue to grow, poisoning the entire loaf. A small amount of malicious gossip can poison a whole church.

I worry about when I have been the yeast. Once, in eighth grade, I was the “mean girl”. I got all the girls to hate one of my best friends by spreading lies about her. Thankfully our principal went to my church, and he was able to stop me with the question, “Would Jesus be proud of you right now?” I tried to make amends, but my friend ended up moving away to live with her father in another town. The yeast of my cruel words caused her immeasurable pain. When have you stirred up trouble? When have you released that small bit of malice that destroyed relationships?

But there is hope! Paul says that we can celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast of malice and evil, but with the new unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Let's each work hard this Lenten season to leave the yeast out of our conversations and out of our hearts. Let's celebrate the Easter Festival with new hearts that are filled with sincerity and truth.

Helen Coleman

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

Genesis 42: 18-28

1 Corinthians 5:9 – 6:8

Mark 4: 1-20

The three Bible passages today all seem to relate to judging and the differences among people and their relationship to the spirit and words of Christ. In the New Testament reading from Mark we hear the parable of the sower of the seed. This must have been a well-known story from the life of Jesus because it also appears in the gospels of Luke and Matthew. Jesus talks about the seeds (words from God) planted by the sower falling on all sorts of ground, and the varying results of the seeds depending on the type of ground. Only those sown on good ground are expected to grow and bear fruit. Those that fall on the path, rocky ground or among the thorns will never grow or will only grow for little while. It is comforting to think that even the disciples who traveled with Jesus and heard him talk a lot seem to have needed some help understanding the metaphors Jesus uses in this story. It is the stories in the Bible that are used when we are first introduced to the Bible and Christianity. It is the stories that Jesus told that we hear and remember long after we have forgotten the points raised during a theological discussion. Stories are used by every effective speaker to explain and teach their ideas. I suspect that frustrated missionaries who were not living up to their personal expectations regarding the conversion of non-believers, would have benefited from reviewing this parable and contemplating the fact that nowhere in the parable does Jesus mention that it was the fault of the sower that not every seed produced as much crop as that which fell on good ground.

In the reading from Genesis, we hear the story of Joseph meeting with his brothers, who have come to Egypt to buy food to save the family from famine. They realize that the official that they are meeting with is their brother Joseph, who they had sold into slavery many years before, because they were jealous of their father's preference for him. I suspect that Joseph may have been less than gracious about his father's favor! Joseph does not tell them that he recognizes them. After holding them in prison, Joseph sells them the food but requires them to leave one brother in prison and to return with the youngest brother. In the story, the brothers realize that they are being punished for their earlier behavior and are anguished. Their guilt increases when, on the way home to Israel, they discover that the money that they had paid for the food has been packed in the bags holding the food. This story seems to me to be more straight-forward than Jesus' parable. There will be consequences for your actions – and perhaps, forgiveness.

I must admit that the Epistle reading today was my least favorite of the three. Paul chastises the church in Corinth for continuing to associate with a member who is: "*sexually immoral, greedy, an idolater, reviler, drunkard or robber*". In the same letter he states that they are not expected to disassociate themselves from those who are NOT in the church and fail to behave according to the behavior standards of the church. Based on my readings regarding the character of Corinth at this time (port city with a diverse and not universally God-fearing population), that sounds practical. He also asserts that they should NOT take disputes among themselves to the non-Christian judicial system, but find a wise and trusted person in the Christian community to judge in disputes among the members of the church. The part that feels like it applies most to today is the admonition: "*God will judge those outside.*"

Sally Shea Potts

Thursday, March 1, 2018

Genesis 42:29-38

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Mark 4:21-34

I have always loved the parables. As a child attending Catholic School, from a non-Catholic family, they were the first things from the Bible which made sense. I loved the way Jesus used the metaphorical language to engage people. I could imagine being in a crowd of people who had been drawn by the idea of hearing something new. In those times when life was only about survival for so many people, Jesus told them there was more to life; that each life was precious. I really connected with the idea of people of all types being drawn to find out more about this new Prophet. The parables would have been a way they could instantly connect with his message, in the same way I did.

The parable of the mustard seed appears in Mark, Matthew and Luke. I have always wondered why the gospel writers repeated the same stories. Some of them had slight differences in interpretation, but the mustard seed is one which is pretty much identical in all three. Reflecting on this made me wonder if it's because the message is not just simple but fundamental to Christianity. The image I see in my mind's eye is of this teeny, tiny seed blossoming into a huge tree. It's so comforting and constructive. The idea that our faith can be such a miniscule, almost insignificant thing which can grow within each of us to be something substantial. If we tend to it, it can be something other people use for protection and support. This is amazing.

There are few times in our lives when we know what we are doing is making a difference. I think Jesus was not only saying God values each of us, but that we can be of value to each other. What greater purpose can there be? You could say the mustard seed represents the genesis of faith in all of us. It is a perfect link to the Golden Rule, love your neighbor. If you know God is in all of us and we are loved by God, how short is the connection to loving each other!

Caroline Fea

Friday, March 2, 2018

Genesis 43: 1-15
1 Corinthians 7:1-9
Mark 4:35-41

There are a few stories in the Bible that everybody simply knows. From what I have experienced, regardless of religion, spirituality, age: somewhere you heard these stories and they stuck. They are: Jesus turning water into wine, one many college kids have recited after the keg has run dry. Jesus turning 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread into a feast. This one is so fantastical, it is one that I oddly find the easiest to believe. And the final one, Jesus calming the sea. The latter was the reading which I was given for the day.

I love this story, Jesus, asleep at the stern of the boat, in the middle of a great storm. Can't you just see his disciples huddled together, basically drawing straws hoping to not have to be the one to wake him up. And what does he say when he is woken? As we all know, "Peace! Be still." But, here is the question, whom was Jesus talking to? I believe there are three options.

The most literal choice is Jesus was actually talking to the sea. Annoyed from being woken after a long day, needing to rest his head, he kind of asks the sea to knock it off. Who among us hasn't cursed under our breath at some ill-timed storm completely out of our control?

The second option, and maybe the least obvious, is Jesus was talking to God. If I had to relate this to my own life, I imagine one of my kids climbing just out of my reach, biking too far in front of me, precariously balancing on little legs that are just learning how to work. Or, making a bad choice that I have no control over. In all these examples, they are close enough for me to see them, but not close enough to truly help them. Their response, whether verbal or not, is "Mom, back off, I've got this." And, the truth is, a time comes when I am not supposed to help them. As much as I want to jump in, because "I know better", I gave them the tools to try and figure it out, and that is all I can do. So, Jesus was, in a way, letting God know, "Hey, you trusted me with a job, please let me do it in my own way." Be still, and be patient. Jesus was given the tools to do what God had put into his heart and soul to do. And, as sure as a kid falls, or mans' faith is tested, I guarantee there were and always will be bruised knees, and bruised hearts.

The final, most thought-of option was, his Disciples. He was frustrated, *'Do they still not have faith, after all I have done and said?'* Maybe he knew, with every little break in faith, he was closer to having to complete his ultimate sacrifice to mankind, dying on the cross. Every time his disciples were yet again not able to be still and listen with their hearts, the peace they so wanted was more and more unattainable. It solidified, what he initially always knew, that he would have to die and be resurrected in order for us to truly and finally believe that if we let our hearts be still, the peace will come in the form of the Kingdom of God.

I wish I could say I was already there, but I'm not. In fact I know, as my children climb too high, or bike too fast, or make the right choice in a bad situation, they are the ones that have that peace and stillness we all wish we could have. We need to look at that faith, before the world teaches us differently, and learn to just trust in Him. We have been given the tools; it is up to us to use them.

So maybe to try and answer whom Jesus was talking to when he said, "Peace! Be still." It was all three. Past, God's trust in Jesus. Present, the sea, and loss of control. And future, every single one of us. Jesus calmed the sea so we didn't have to. He sacrificed himself so we could all have the opportunity to be still, to listen to Him, and always hope for Peace.

Rayne Devlin

Saturday, March 3, 2018

Genesis 43: 16-34

1 Corinthians 7:10-24

Mark 5: 1-20

All three readings remind me of an old book entitled "*Man's Need and God's Action,*" by Reuel L Howe, for they display the essence of the Lord's love and complete knowledge of each human being and what is best for his or her welfare.

In Genesis, Joseph's brothers are in fear of what will happen to them because of the money they found in their sacks. It was that with which they had purchased food and discovered on their way home. So they went to his steward and told him their woe. He told them not to be afraid he had their money, and that their God had put it in their bags. Why didn't they consult Joseph instead? Perhaps because at this point they did not know Joseph as kin (he had not revealed it) and they feared him. And how did the steward know about the God of their father? That amazed me! Was it by revelation or did Joseph tell him of the LORD? Food for thought! However, God's hand is active in the picture.

In the Epistle Paul gives the Corinthians God's word (not his own) regarding marriage and divorce. Paul of himself commands the believers to be content and remain with God in whatsoever state they are in. Good advice, especially for those of us in times of stress. For me, I more than often need His help, which is always perfect, simple, and not of my own perception.

Man's need and God's action is vividly seen in the gospel reading. Poor Legion was in dire need of freedom from the bondage to all his destructive demons and the Lord knew it! He cleansed and set him free and in his right mind. I know the joy of being set free by the Lord from the bad and unhealthy habit of smoking. It happened when I was in my forties. After I was first healed, like a naughty child, I tried it again and it was like walking through a pile of burning leaves back in Chicago where I grew up. I couldn't stand it! It was all God's doing of love and mercy and I am so glad and thankful. Legion was certainly grateful and wanted to be with Jesus, but the Lord had compassion on all the inhabitants of Decapolis who needed salvation as well and sent him home for that purpose.

Psalm 75 is one appointed for today. Verse 1 (KJV) reads: "Unto Thee, O God do we give thanks, do we give thanks for Thy name is near, Thy wondrous works declare."

Nancy Kindley

Monday March 5, 2018

Genesis 44:18-34

1 Corinthians 7:25-31

Mark 5:21-43

"Do not fear, only believe." ... When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about ...

Whenever I read this verse, my heart is always moved by Jesus' kindness and confidence. He clearly sees what's happening in a totally different way than the mortal world. To the crowd (and to us), the child is obviously dead. To Jesus, the child is merely "sleeping." Theologians have debated whether the child is in some trauma or coma, so the crowd mistakes her as dead and Jesus' attention "revives" her. I guess this is logical, but I believe there is more to this story. I believe Jesus wants us to look past what our senses tell us, and try to see through God's eyes. Have you ever noticed something that on the surface looks very "normal," and yet guessed there is something bigger and more powerful going on—something that excites your spirit to greater possibilities and fulfillment?

When I've had this kind of experience, I sometimes wonder about the spiritual connections beyond our physical state in this world. I realize that we can't physically "see" a life different than this one. (Any "heaven" must be wonderfully subjective.) But I also believe we can have hope for more. Our biological selves are primed by survival instinct for "what comes next." Maybe that's part of the "God gene" in our bodies that draws us more into what can be "the fullness of our being." Beyond trying to describe an afterlife, I can say our shared consciousness exists within the all-affirming energy we know as God.

My hope is in the self beyond the physical body, where my loved ones and I together are aware and exploring another nature as unique and rewarding as the life we were given in our birth.

My faith is that all natures we now perceive as parts are resolved into one common, purposeful togetherness. All our successes and failures of the will are gathered into an inevitable wholeness. We shine with one another's brightness—all embraced, nothing excluded—and through our shared experience of God, we perpetuate reconciliation and mutual abundance.

I believe there is a dynamic spiritual exchange that happens when people share the love of God—in this world or any other. Our bond is unbroken. How could it be otherwise, as we are all in God and God is in all things? I regard this case as our marvelous capacity of higher consciousness to see things as they really are. To paraphrase St. Paul, "We see God not as the world does, but as are hearts do." We "see" another in the light of our intimate knowledge of the person; that is, we see who he or she really is in God, apart from a name, a form, a biography, and even our shared histories. Our connection is a shared presence always in the "here and now," beyond any geography that might limit our love of being together.

In some way, I believe the spirit invites us into the positive qualities of our relationships, so our authentic selves, unburdened by physical details, may embrace in pure compassion, trust, and hope. So while one is born, lives, and passes on, our ability to behold the best of the person never ceases to "be." We are unlimited and uncompromising in who we truly are.

This is the context for how I see the Gospel scripture today. And whether I am the neighbor in the crowd, the parent, or the child there wrapped in the mystery of Jesus' love, I believe I too am raised every day from the small view of my one life into the big vision of our shared life.

Matt Jones

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Genesis 45:1-15

1 Corinthians 7:32-40

Mark 6:1-13



You're welcome! (or not...)

It is nothing new. Churches live or die based on the ability to welcome and sustain new members into their fold. At St. Timothy's there is a renewed investment to be visible as a place where people can feel an inviting presence and a sense of belonging.

Two of the three scripture readings for today share the theme of how it feels to be welcomed, or not. I will go out on a limb to infuse these stories with what I think are common human emotions surrounding the vulnerability of feeling welcomed. Whether it be with family or community, being received into the presence of others can be like navigating an emotional mine field.

The backstory to the Old Testament lesson is complicated with all kinds of emotions. Anger and jealousy on the part of Joseph's brothers nearly killed him and led him to a very unwelcoming place in a prison in a foreign land. But Joseph prevailed, with God's help, and rose up to a level that was totally unexpected for a young Jewish man in the kingdom of Pharaoh. Later, when his brothers traveled to Egypt to beg for sustenance during years of famine, they most likely feared the possibility of rejection in the face of their great need. Their intense vulnerability had to be an incredible burden as they travelled many miles on their journey. However, the need outweighed the fear and moved them forward along the long road.

When Joseph recognized his brothers, he was so overcome with emotion that even after sending his court minions away, he cried so loudly with joy that they could hear him throughout the palace (at least he had probably never heard that "real men don't cry"). But add to this the fear and concern among the brothers about their previous horrific murderous act based on their hatred and jealousy of Joseph, you then have one incredibly emotional scene. However, love and forgiveness triumph and the brothers experience relief beyond measure when they are welcomed by Joseph. They and their father would be welcomed to live out the famine years in the land of plenty that their previously hated brother had established in Egypt. Quite a turn of events centered around an unexpected welcome.

Jesus, in the Gospel reading, was not so fortunate. His hometown family could not get past their familiarity with him as Joseph's son, the carpenter. That image clouded their minds so much that they were not able to grasp the amazing ministry going on in their presence. It was primarily their loss, but Jesus felt it too. Consider the feeling of rejection that would surround a reception that was as far from celebrating a "hometown hero" as it could possibly be. But Jesus is brave – so brave he could walk the path to the cross that we remember in Lent and so brave he didn't give up and let rejection win the day. Instead he developed a new strategy to include his followers in a campaign that outlined a distinct response to possible rejection. *"If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them."* From then on, the disciples were empowered to continue Jesus' ministry, even when feeling unwelcomed and rejected.

When emotions such as fear, worry, sadness and anger take hold in our lives, as they will often do, the idea of being welcomed into a family or community can transform us. Feeling included and valued and finding a sense of belonging are some of the most powerful human needs. Knowing that we have these needs ourselves will help us lovingly extend such an opportunity to others. If we find ourselves feeling welcomed at St. Timothy's as we contemplate and worship in the quiet season of Lent, perhaps we can be empowered to welcome others to share our community with us.

Jan Mahoney

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

Genesis 45:16-28
1 Corinthians 8
Mark 6:13-29

They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them. King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb. Mark 6:13-29

This passage speaks to us during Lent because of the range of dark human emotion and theater expressed in one passage. It identifies our human nature despite the passing of 2 millennia since the events in this story occurred. Absent John's physical head on a platter, the plot could be mistaken for that of a modern soap opera. Read the passage again and find fear, jealousy, vengeance, manipulation, cruelty, disgust, pride, grief, and love. Wow, that is some story, and all in 16 verses.

Lent is an opportunity to identify where the soap opera may be in our lives and perhaps learn to focus our human expression on love, like that shown by John's disciples who took his body and laid it in a tomb.

-Spencer & Rena Fulweiler

Thursday, March 8, 2018

Genesis 46:1-7

1 Corinthians 9:1-15

Mark 6:30-46

The gospel reading for today is about the well - known story of the Loaves and the Fishes. In my review of the whole passage I came away with a new meaning to this message. In 6:31 Jesus tells the apostles to *"Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while."* These men were asked to go out and preach the Good News. Jesus realized that God's path is hard work and that they required time to rest and regenerate. As the story continues *"he went ashore he saw a great crowd and had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late" 6:34-35... to which Jesus replied, "You give them something to eat." 6:37*

How would you feel if you were his apostle? I think many of us would feel tired, frustrated and cheated of the rest we were expecting. From here on, the reference to "apostles" disappears and those who assist him are now referred to as "disciples." The word disciple refers to one who is a student of Jesus. *"Taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. And all ate and were filled." 6:41-42. "Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men" 6-44* In our world we would consider this a miracle, but is it important to know for sure? A generous benefactor could have donated his money to help feed the crowd. The Jewish mothers could have gathered together and brought food to share to make sure everyone was fed. If Jesus came to Danville and preached to us, wouldn't many of us want to spend our whole day listening to him? Would there be some of us who would make accommodations for these people, to see that those people were taken care of? The bottom line was that the problem was solved *"Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray". 6:45-46*

The message I take from this passage is that God cares for each and every one of us. Those who are asked to deliver God's message and those who have a desire to understand God's message as well. What's most important is our faith in God's omnipotence. We should do what God would have us do with the faith that everything will turn out according to God's plan and give thanks to God for watching over us.

In gratitude,

Nora Hudson

Friday, March 9, 2018

Genesis 47: 1-26

I Corinthians 9:16-27

Mark 6:47-56

Joseph willingly became a slave to provide food to all the people amidst a famine in Canaan and Egypt. He went to extraordinary lengths to see that all the people of Egypt had food. First, he collected all their money, then all their livestock, then all their land, and ultimately took away their freedom. Joseph enslaved all the people to Pharaoh and they submitted to slavery willingly! All this personal sacrifice in Egypt took place to achieve the final goal: sustenance – saving the people.

In I Corinthians, Paul proclaims his willing enslavement to the cause of the gospel. He describes how he has deliberately presented himself as “*under the law*”, “*outside the law*”, and “*weak*” in order to win disparate groups of people to Christ. “*I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.*”

In I Corinthians 9:24-25, the athlete is Paul’s metaphor for the willing slave. Isn’t it true that if your greatest desire were to become an NFL quarterback, or a prima ballerina, or an Olympic marathon gold medalist, you would have to enslave yourself to the regimen necessary to reach that goal? And if you indeed achieved your goal, you would receive what Paul calls “*a perishable wreath.*” Most of us do not set for ourselves such singularly lofty objectives, but I, for one, realize that at times in my life I’ve enslaved myself to short-term goals or desires that I usually masquerade as “needs”. Lent is a good time of year to review who our “masters” are, to reexamine to which causes, habits, occupations, and activities we have subjugated ourselves. The “*imperishable wreath*” that Paul describes is the only prize of lasting value that is worth our self-enslavement. It’s time for renewed devotion to our commission to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world.

Don Plondke

Saturday, March 10, 2018

Genesis 47: 27-48:7

1 Corinthians 10: 1-13

Mark 7: 1-23

There have been many times when I thought God was testing my faith. I would be confused and worried that I may not live up to, what I thought, God was asking of me. I was taught that God would give us only what we could bear. Sometimes I waivered in my faith. Why is God testing me? I was not sure I had the strength. When I realized that God loved me, no matter what my weaknesses. I realized that, with His help, I could meet challenges because He would be with me always.

True faith means that one does not expect explanations from God. It is my journey to follow Christ no matter what. For me, that meant that I needed to a conscious Christian. I could not go along in my life and assume that everything I did was what God wanted. When I became a wide-awake Christian, I felt relief and joy. I now, more fully embrace my Christianity and my love of God.

In the Epistle for today, Christ is telling us that simply professing one's Christianity does not make them a Christian. Living our faith every day is the hard part. Attending church, then going out the door and ignoring Christ's words, is not Christianity. The real dedication to Christ comes from doing the good he wants us to do every day. That can be the challenge. Helping others, living a life of compassion and service, loving our neighbors, accepting those that are different from us. are all ways that we live Christ's words every day.

Linda Clark

Monday, March 12th, 2018

Genesis 49:1 28 (NRSV)
1 Corinthians 10:14 11:1
Mark 7:24 37

March 12, 2018 happens to be my 24th Wedding Anniversary, so in theory a propitious day for contemplation.

However, I can't say that the three readings for today share an anniversary-appropriate theme of enduring love and celebration of relationship, although they certainly do share very colorful terms of expression!

For example, from Genesis 49:1 28, I am not entirely sure of the 2018 relevance of the phrase: "*Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes*". This passage uses Jacob's prophecies for his sons as the foundational myth for the origins of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Though not quite on that scale, as a father, I do understand the concept of speculating on your children's paths in life, albeit with somewhat more optimistic aspirations.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians (on this day of all days why could I not get the one about love?!) he provides guidance on how to interact with communities that do not share their views. Generally sound advice, especially when he exhorts them: "*Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other*". As a Brit who has lived here for 15 years, that does not feel like a particularly common American business practice, but it definitely feels like a strong Christian value!

Finally, in the Gospel we have miracles of faith. In this story I do see the parallels with marriage. On our wedding day 24 years ago in a beautiful church in London, Caroline and I were young, and somewhat inured to the curveballs of God's universe. The vows we repeated to endure "for richer or poorer" seemed frankly abstract.

However, today, amid an unexpectedly long period of unemployment, I have huge reason to be thankful to Caroline for taking those vows seriously. I have immeasurable gratitude to her, that she continues to have a miraculous faith in me, and in our relationship.

In whatever Lenten wilderness we may walk, at any time of the year or time of life, we have to believe, as does the Syrophenician woman in the Gospel story, that we are all worthy of God's grace. Against all odds we must continue to have faith that, in the words of the anchoress Julian of Norwich, "all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well". Happy Anniversary Caroline!

James Vila

Tuesday March 13, 2018

Genesis 49:29-50:14
1 Corinthians 11:17-34
Mark 8:1-10

This reading records Mark's version of one of the "feeding the multitude" stories we have in all the synoptic gospels.

...“He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they distributed them to the crowd. They also had a few small fish; and after blessing them, he ordered that these too should be distributed. They ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over; seven baskets full. Now there were about four thousand people.”

There are many attempted explanations of the feeding of the large crowd who had come out to listen to Jesus; from a miracle, to the more mundane sharing of food brought along by many of the crowd for a day away from home. Jesus and the disciples were certainly depicted as motivated by genuine care and compassion for the immediate needs of those individuals who were listening to him that day. Possibly the story is spiritual symbolism; that we should bring what we have in time, money and talent to God and it will be multiplied? That our resources are never too little to serve God and this is an example of Jesus feeding the crowd with information about the Kingdom? We only know the story was important enough to be included in all the gospels and, although details vary, the results were that everyone was fed and food was left over.

Whatever you believe, perhaps the central message of the story illustrates the bounty provided by God and our responsibility to ensure that, as Jesus modeled, others' basic needs are provided for. A simple message as relevant today as in the time of the event — we should ensure that all are fed — a social justice issue.

In the U.S.A, 1 in 6 people face hunger, including 16.2 million children. [July 2016 stats] We are one with all creation, children of the Creator, and all have equal value in God's eyes. Christians and most religious traditions have always sought to feed those with limited access to food. Yet as a country we persist in not prioritizing the provision of basic needs for our brothers and sisters — food and shelter. In this technological age, with advanced distribution systems can we not do better than having some of our children go hungry? Is this acceptable to us as Christians following the life and teaching of Jesus? I think the story does teach us that all is possible with God, and the problems are never too large to be solved, certainly by the richest nation.

Alison Hill

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Genesis 50:15-26

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Mark 8:11-26

God continues to love Joseph and his brothers in spite of all the difficulties, sibling rivalry and difficult times of loss and famine. All the feelings of jealousy, remorse, and longings for forgiveness are in play. Can we know as faithful people in our own families that God desires good for us? How much more could we offer one another and the people who know us best if we prayed for one another expecting goodness and kindness to increase? Could we grow stronger to serve the world? What would it be like to pray for ourselves that we might see more clearly and be healed? What would it be like to believe we could be healed in our families, our places of work, and in the places we serve?

When we acknowledge our brokenness we allow God in the cracks of our illusions of "everything is great" or "everything is awful." We start paying attention to each other instead of the "noise" that distracts us from the things that are really important. Can we live more authentically with each other? Yes! Do we remember that we have already been given the gifts that will make a difference in our own lives, in the lives of the people we love, and in the lives of the people God loves...? Do we remember that God has already given the gifts to others that can enable us to walk this journey of faith more fully?

What would our own extended communities of faith be like if we accepted challenge and difference as a way to know our personal and communal growing edges as we become more free to serve in the Body of Christ?

God is already giving us the gifts...We only have to turn around and be healed.

God, help me to see...

Susan Geissler-O'Neil

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Exodus 1:6-22

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Mark 8:27-9:1

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

How can we read today's New Testament passage and not think about our relationship with our very own St. Timothy's?!

It is so easy to fall into feeling that our contributions to our beloved community are too small, too insignificant, to make a difference. But this familiar passage from Corinthians reminds us that this is not at all the case! Paul uses the analogy of the body to argue that it is the summation of gifts, all different, all important, that make up the body as a whole. That is precisely what we are, and exactly how we come together with the gifts that we have been given to comprise one body. And as important as our individual strengths are, our individual weaknesses also help define the character of our body as a whole, don't they? Where I am weak, you can carry a heavier load, as I will surely do the same for you in another way, when given that opportunity.

We are all called to different ministries at St. Tim's. Often this calling is the result of prayerful consideration of what strengths we have been bestowed – "God given gifts." But perhaps the "body" would benefit when we challenge ourselves, to step out of that comfort zone (I know that's hard for me) and experience an aspect of ministry that does not necessarily reflect the more obvious strengths that we are already keenly aware of. Maybe...just maybe... our greatest gifts to St. Timothy's (or to our families, our working teams, or other groups we are members of) are lying hidden and waiting to be revealed – if only we are brave enough to try.

Wally DeYoung

Friday, March 16, 2018

Exodus 2:1-22

1 Corinthians 12:27-13:3

Mark 9:2-13

“If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing” (Corinthians 12:27-13:3).

After reading this passage I realized that love makes the world go around. I know this might seem cheesy, but it's true. God doesn't care if you are the smartest person in the world or can even move mountains; all God cares about is love and how much love you have within you. In God's eyes, you are nothing if you don't have love.

In my life, I am so blessed to be loved by so many people. My friends and family show acts of love everyday towards me, whether they are big or small acts. Like when my Dad makes my breakfast in the morning before school. Or when I broke my arm and my best friend, Taylor, came over to my house that day to bring me cupcakes, just to make me feel better. Just those small little acts by others warm my heart.

And I know love goes both ways, too. You have to give love to get love. I love others by just saying good morning and kissing my family when I wake up every day, to bringing chocolates over to my friends' houses to cheer them up when they are sad. I learned an old saying when I was little, which is to “treat others the way you want to be treated.” I wanted to make a new saying based off of that, which is to “love others the way you want to be loved”. After reading this passage, I really think that everyone should remember to love others the way they want to be loved, so the world will spin on and on forever. :)

Allison Geraci-Novy

Saturday, March 17, 2018

Exodus 2:23-3:15

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Mark 9: 14-29

Before I met my husband, Rob, I never envisioned being married; in fact, I affirmatively disavowed the institution. I perceived the task of being someone's superlative in every aspect --- his best friend, lover, supporter, etc. ---, for the rest of his life, as impossible. For years I attributed this repulsion to selfishness and reasoned that I was better off single because I could concentrate on my career. But after having been committed to my husband for about four years now, I realize my reluctance to marry was propelled by fear. I also realized that anything I could have accomplished in life alone in no way would have compared to the satisfaction of loving and being loved.

And if the reciprocating love of a spouse did not bring enough joy into my life, over two years ago I embarked on my journey of "establishing a relationship with God," as I had promised our friend who married Rob and me. I had zero clue what that entailed, so I just attended church and various Sunday classes with an open mind and assumed at some point, I would know when God and I had made the ultimate commitment.

I know that being baptized was the sacramental commitment, but it wasn't until I finished reading the final Mitford series novel a few months ago that I realized that God had committed to me long ago and was just patiently waiting, as Rob had, for His answers to all my questions to finally provide the assurance I needed that this love was not fleeting. The words that comforted me and provided assurance of His eternal love were, "He made us for his pleasure."

With those words, I finally realized that I did not have to be perfect in order to be loved, and when my imperfections arose, I would be forgiven and the unconditional love would flow uninterrupted. I was nothing and knew nothing without His love, the greatest gift of all. For this, I am grateful.

Denise Mednick

Monday, March 19, 2018

Exodus 4:10-31

Corinthians 14:1-19

Mark 9:30-41

Today's readings are about speaking, and in the world we live in today, communication with each other is often misunderstood. In such a diverse world today, many of us speak in different languages (tongues). In Exodus 4, Moses said to the LORD, "*Oh my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past, nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.*" The LORD said, "*now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak.*"

Love should be our highest goal. But we should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy. If we have the ability to speak in tongues, we will be only talking to God, since people will not be able to understand us. We would be speaking by the power of the Spirit and it would all be mysterious. But those whose prophesy strengthen others, encourage them, and comfort them. A person who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens each of us, or an entire church.

To help carry out God's mission here at St. Timothy's, we need to be able to speak with one another lovingly, as God loves each of us. As the readings today point out, we need to be able to speak the best way to be understood and strengthen each other and the church.

Bob Fletcher

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

Exodus 5:1-6:1

1 Corinthians 14:20-33

Mark 9:42-50

In Chapter 12 of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he reminds and teaches us that every one of us, without exception, has been given very special gifts, the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Absolutely no one has been left out. A person can have a number of spiritual gifts, but no one person has all the gifts except Christ. These gifts to us, given at baptism, are not for self-aggrandizement because all gifts are of equal value. They are given for our ministry, together with all our church, as the visible and working Body of Christ. Together we can do all things, our many ministries together, that we could never do alone. This is what the church is about. We understand that Christians need to be part of a church family. We cannot be a solitary Christian who does not worship with a church family or exercise their ministry through the church.

A powerful illustration of this is that of an auto. Our auto is working perfectly and is fulfilling its purpose, the reason for its creation. The auto transports us everywhere we require, but if one thing goes wrong, we are in trouble—no gasoline, the engine won't start, head lights fail! Our auto is no longer fulfilling its created purpose. Further in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses the analogy of the human body with the church body, the body of Christ which has all the spiritual gifts. Look around in our St. Tim's Church family and see the many members who are exercising their ministry as helpers, teachers, evangelists, artists, leaders, healers, prophets, speakers, miracle workers (Yes, miracle workers), and organizers. Like our perfectly operating auto, our church is awesome when every member is contributing their energies through their spiritual gift(s) so that Christ, our resurrected Lord, is alive and active through our ministering. This is not only to friends in St. Tim's, but especially to those outside the church, no matter their color, caste, race, gender, age, rich or poor. They are all our brothers and sisters in Christ and we shall know and experience the blessings that come to us in our hearts from our Lord and Savior.

The passage for this day's reading is from further along in 1 Corinthians. It is about a stranger gift of the Spirit than we are familiar with. When people talk negatively about this gift, more often than not, they have not experienced this gift themselves, nor, in any of their Christian friends through the different branches of the churches to which they belong. Like the other spiritual gifts given to us, this gift also changes people's lives and blesses them as they contribute to the life of the church as the Body of Christ. Speaking in tongues in Corinth was causing problems. When individuals spoke in what seemed an unintelligible language and usually could be interpreted by, at the most, one person in the congregation. Paul wrote that if no one could understand the speaker in tongues, then it was better if it was not done in church. That is the understanding of the present-day church. People still speak in tongues throughout the church family. More often than not, they use speaking in tongues in their individual prayer life. Several people I have known, and know, sing their private prayer in tongues. Two have told me that they sing their prayers in tongues while taking their morning shower.

Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift and is the one gift the speakers keep private in church gatherings, but which sustains them with their other ministries. Lent is that time of the year to check out the spiritual gifts we have been given, and whether we are using them in a maximum way to glorify God in Christ by bringing those who don't yet know Him into His family, the church, the living Body of Christ. --Maurice Turner

Wednesday, March 21, 2018

Exodus 7:8-24

2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6

Mark 10:1-16

In five days we will remember and celebrate the procession of Christ into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. This day seemed an auspicious beginning for a time in the Roman-held city, by Christ and his followers. Christ knows it is the beginning of the end of his earthly life. He alone knows what is ahead.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul refers to Christ as continuing to lead his people *"in procession,"* saying that, through us his word will be spread in every place. We are to *"spread the fragrance that comes from knowing him,"* and *"we are the aroma of Christ among those being saved."* Since he is no longer here to speak for himself, we must continue his work, spreading his word.

Paul asks who is sufficient to do this task since we are not *"peddlers of God's word."* He then answers his own question by telling us that we are *"our own letter, written in our hearts to be read and known by all."*

St Teresa of Avila, the 16th century nun, ascetic, reformer, mystic, and visionary spent her life working for God in Spain. She herself led a life in which she followed scripture very closely and devotedly, sometimes enduring very difficult times. She wrote prayers which were meant to comfort and guide and inspire. Attributed to her is a prayer which expands on Paul's thoughts of what our job as Christians is, with our task being to share Christ's work, since he is no longer here in mortal form. Her gentle words compliment and add to Paul's, and give us a simple directive as to how to fulfill our earthly role. A portion of this prayer says:

Christ has no body but yours.
No hands, no feet on Earth but yours.
Your eyes are the eyes with which he looks compassion on the world
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands with which he blesses the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet.
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body here on Earth but yours.

In days, we are to experience yet again the death of Christ, His resurrection, and then His passing from His Earthly role. The direction has been given us to continue to spread His word, with each of us finding our own way in which to fulfill this task.

Patty Alexanderson

Thursday, March 22, 2018

Exodus 7:25-8:19

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Mark 10:17-31

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God. Mark 10:17-25

One theme resonates with me in this passage from the Book of Mark (and, it's not the one you think - wealth and providing for others). I read this passage as also saying we need to love God and live our lives authentically. I do find the discussion of wealth and the rich and the kingdom of heaven and those who are first and those who are last compelling, but it's the first bit of the reading that stands out to me.

In this passage, the man claims he has kept the commandments "since my youth." But, it's clearly not enough. In addition to keeping his wealth to himself, I am left wondering if he also perhaps did not keep the commandments he claims he did with a loving and genuine heart. Was he perhaps "talking the talk," but not "walking the walk"? Did he live the commandments with true belief and faith in the Godly message and meaning? Was he only going through the motions? I find the first of the passage serves as a reminder to me that I need to check my belief and faith behind my actions and thoughts as a Christian and member of St. Timothy's. I need to ask myself, "Am I doing this with love for God and my community in my heart"? If the answer is no, perhaps I am not ready to act.

Allison Fletcher

Friday, March 23, 2018

Exodus 9:13-35

2 Corinthians 4:1-12

Mark 10:32-45

Please refer back to the Monday, February 26, lectionary note, as Paul is still having trouble with the Corinthians. This time they are probably accusing him of being deceitful because he did not insist on following Mosaic law. In responding, Paul describes how the apostles act in a world that persecutes them. It is a quiet statement of the truth; it does not fling accusations back at his detractors or insult them. The apostles reflect the light of Christ that lives in their hearts. To emphasize that the strength of the apostles is a gift from God, Paul describes them as common clay vessels. Whatever gifts and strength the apostles have is held in very fragile vessels; homeless, ill-fed and poorly clothed humans. The apostles are not crushed by their condition and persecution; they stand ready to reflect the light of Christ back to the world.

How easy it is today to find false accusations of Christians and to experience the enmity of others, simply by calling oneself Christian. And how easy it is to respond in less than Christian ways. The hostility on both sides is a hallmark of Facebook posts when Christianity is a topic. We can also retreat from the conflict in silence; denial of Christ by our silence or avoidance of talking about our faith.

The Post Eucharistic Prayer is again a reminder to me that God feeds and strengthens me to go out into the world and do the work that has been given me. How do I know what my work is? The world has a way of letting me know; soup...I know how to make soup, console someone...I know how to do that. The gospel reading for today tells me that the work is not always grand...I must be willing to take on the role of servant.

Gloria Rousseau

Saturday March 24, 2018

Exodus 10:21-11:8

2 Corinthians 4: 13-18

Mark 10: 46-52

Lent is ending, and within in a week we begin our celebration of Christ 's victory over death. The church will be bright with the colors of Spring and Resurrection. Off with the dull/old on with the bright/new.

These three Scriptures have a lot to offer. The Old Testament telling us of the story of Moses, Pharaoh and the plagues that the Lord, after fair warning from Moses sent to Egypt. The final one causing "*a loud cry that will be heard over all of Egypt such as never has been or will be again*", the killing of the firstborn of EVERYONE, from Pharaoh's son on down, but the Israelites were spared. Reading this as a Twenty First Century woman I think, what was with Pharaoh? Stubborn? Egotistical? Unwilling to change? We could spend lots of time thinking and discussing Pharaoh and his "issues". I'll just leave it with Pharaoh couldn't or wouldn't listen.

"

I was blessed to have taken part in an Israel Pilgrimage in about 1984 with two Parishes from our Diocese. I have a clear memory of many of the places mentioned in the Bible. If memory serves me, we went to Jericho on the west bank of the Jordan River (read sand pit) getting off the bus to use the "necessarium". Sitting there were a group of men having their afternoon "Hooka Time", not to be confused with Tea Time. They politely offered us the chance to partake of their well - used pipes...I declined. The area is arid, and I can see Jesus and his followers walking here. The Gospel tells the story of a blind man, Bartimaeus by name, and he could not be hushed up by his friends and others when he tried to get Jesus' attention. He called even louder and louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus heard, and Bartimeaus' faith, and I like to add his persistence, healed him.

The Epistle starts out with believing and speaking out..ummm I sense a theme here. The writer continues to remind us that just as Jesus was raised, we also shall be raised to God's nearer presence. We are here to share God's love, and in that sharing we are blessed. We are not to be discouraged. The last sentence reminds us that that while our "*outer nature is wasting away*" (I can relate there!) that our "*inner nature is renewed day by day.*" What wondrous assurance.

Continued Blessings on your Lenten journey and always,

Patti Farris

Monday, March 26, 2018

Lamentations 1: 1-2, 6-12

2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Mark 11: 12-25

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. Mark 11:25

Forgive. Doesn't Jesus get it? I can't forgive her for all the years that she has hurt me!
Forgive. What does He expect? I can't do it!!!

But then I begin to think about the many times I have hurt someone else. Sometimes on purpose, and sometimes without really knowing that I had hurt them. I am so sorry, but I don't know how to ask forgiveness. Is that what she is feeling as well?

I think most of us get caught up in the conundrum of forgiveness. What we did isn't anywhere as bad as what was done to us. Or, the polar opposite. What I did is so unforgivable that even God can't forgive me.

Jesus nailed it again. In order to forgive, we must understand the person that hurt us. We must love that person. Loving doesn't mean excusing behavior or letting someone walk all over us. It means seeing the person as God sees them, as a beloved child who is hurting. When we allow ourselves to love the hurt child within our antagonist, we can begin to feel sorry for them. We can start to love that person, and to forgive that person,

Forgiving means, believing (TRULY believing) that the anger and hatred that we are feeling is worse than the action that we are angry about. We must let the sin go for our own sakes, because anger and pain can eat at us until there is nothing left but a bitter, angry person. When we harbor anger and resentment against anyone, we are allowing our souls to become a breeding ground for unloving behavior—the exact opposite of the loving goodness that God wants for us.

So, forgive those who trespass against you, because it is when we forgive, that we grow more into the loving child of God that Jesus intended us to be. Yes, it is hard. But with every purposeful thought of forgiveness, our heart unbinds just that little bit. And soon, it can become a new spiritual habit—forgiving others as our Father in heaven has forgiven us.

Helen Coleman

Tuesday of Holy Week, March 27, 2018

Lamentations 1: 17-22

2 Corinthians 1:8-22

Mark 11:27-33

Challenges to Worldly Authority Evangelism Begins

Again they came to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?" Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me." They argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But shall we say, 'Of human origin?'" - they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

These very top leaders of the temple were the most powerful Jewish leaders of the time and were undoubtedly worried by the challenges presented by Jesus's message that was turning their world upside down. But really, Jesus was turning the world right side up. He was placing God on top of all Jewish and Roman laws. This left the leadership in a quandary. I recall the line from *Jesus Christ Superstar*, "What do we do with this Jesus of Nazareth? –What do we do with this Carpenter king?" These leaders were intent upon keeping political power for themselves, as this little choice Jesus set up shows. They could have chosen differently. He had already attempted to explain his message to them, but they were never to realize the message – blinded by their own position.

Jesus and the small band of Apostles were just beginning to turn the world right side up by turning everything upside down. Something was happening and is still happening today. Each time someone hears and realizes that the message from Jesus was "Love God – Love you neighbor," the world is more right side up - more in touch with God's love. Even if someone forgets and returns to the message again, the world begins to become more right side up and becomes as God would want it to be.

What I see in this story is the beginning of evangelism. Jesus's message had just begun to resonate with some outside of his circle. The work of evangelism – the advocacy of God's message of Love had begun. Some will hear; some will not. It is not our choice for someone else to hear or not – that is God's work. Our work is to proclaim the message of God's Love to those around us as well as we can. The rest is God's work.

Jim Coleman

Wednesday March 28, 2018

Isaiah 50:4-9a
Hebrews 12:1-3
John 13:21-32

Why the “Great Cloud” Empowers Us

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. --Hebrews 12:1-3

All of these readings are filled with much Spirit and have so much to say. But the one which caught my attention the most was the Hebrews piece. The image of “a great cloud of witnesses” caught my attention. The author presents the concept of the “cloud.” This metaphor is somewhat like how we think of the computing cloud today. Except the author was thinking of God’s cloud of witnesses and challenging us to persevere in a quest for Jesus and the understanding of God’s Love for us all. He was exhorting each of us to cast aside the weight our own sin, so as to lighten our load and more easily rise to find Jesus.

During a 7:00PM Holy week service last year I was particularly moved by a parishioner who said, during a forum-type discussion around the Altar, “The Spirit is flowing back into Saint Timothy’s,” and another parishioner, who promptly stated, “I disagree!,” setting the whole congregation aghast briefly, but then continued stating, “The Spirit is not just flowing; the Spirit is gushing back into Saint Timothy’s!” It continues to do so, this year even more so. This must be an example of the “cloud of witnesses” referred to in this Hebrews piece.

So what is this gushing Spirit that we have from the great cloud of witnesses? It is the Spirit of recognition that the message of Christianity is a movement of the expression of Love for God and Love for our neighbors. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry referenced studies that reported what college age people thought of when they heard the word “Christianity.” 84% in one group associated “judgmental” and “hypocritical” with “Christianity”. In another group 79% associated “anti-gay” with Christianity. In another group, just 41% associated Christianity with “love.” So while the Spirit is gushing in at Saint Timothy’s, our challenge is to take the Spirit we have and share it with our community and the rest of the world. “*Since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses,*” we can do this!

Jim Coleman

Thursday March 29, 2018

Exodus 12: 1-4, (5-10), 11-14
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

The Old Testament reading from Exodus describes the origin of the Passover experience for the Jews (Exodus 12: 1-4, 11-14). The Lord instructs Moses and Aaron in the practice the Israelites are expected to institute. Sacrificing a first-born lamb or goat, sharing with neighbors or solely as a family they are told to sacrifice the animal, mark their homes with the blood and roast and eat all they can, burning the remainder. The Lord states he will pass through the land that night, killing the first- born sons, and the first born of all the animals. He will spare the homes with the sign. The Lord further states that the day of Passover will be a day of remembrance and celebration—forever.

The Epistle describes the first supper and the covenant Jesus brought to all who believe and celebrate (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Jesus instructed the disciples to celebrate his life (and sacrifice) as the new covenant in his blood. By doing so he states that it is done in remembrance of him, proclaiming God's death and sacrifice for them.

The Gospel describes Jesus' washing the disciples' feet and instructs them to wash one another's feet as servants of one another and others (John 13 1-7, 31b-35). He closes with a new commandment—that they love one another...just as he has loved them, they must love one another. He instructs them that 'by these acts everyone will know that they are truly disciples, if they have love for one another'.

These three readings all serve to instruct and inspire. Celebration of the power and dominion of God in Exodus, sacrifice and new life in Corinthians, and the ultimate challenge in the Gospel—to love one another as Jesus loves us. Simple requests that challenge us in our daily lives. The call is not for sacrifice, great works or a perfect life—but to honor God, remember Christ's sacrifice, and love one another as Jesus loves us.

Celebrating the love of God, let us live the love of God and those who see us will 'know we are Christians by our love.'

Mike Oliver

Good Friday, March 30, 2018

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Hebrews 10:16-25

John 18:1-19:42

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10: 23-25

The other two readings for today, Isaiah and the Passion from John, are way too long and too familiar to inspire me. But the small section of Hebrews did resonate because we live in an age when organized religion is in a steep decline, with perhaps a majority of folks now claiming that they are “spiritual but not religious”.

Fair enough, but that is not a Christian notion. Following Christ is a group activity where we “*provoke*” and “*encourage*” each other. And by meeting together we are able to “*hold fast to the confession of our hope*”. And hope is in short supply these days. We are confronted daily with scenes of devastation and hopelessness; homeless refugees, war-torn cities and nations and natural disasters that have unimaginable ramifications for people near and far. Politics has become an “us against them” exercise with millions around the world caught in the crossfire.

The Gospel calls on us to join together to right the wrongs and bring justice to a broken world. If you are Mother Teresa, you may be able to go it alone, but for most of us, community is the facilitator. From its earliest days, the church was synonymous with community. That is still true.

Ron Kuhlman

Holy Saturday, March 31, 2018

Lamentation 3:1-9, 19-24

1 Peter 1:4-8

Matthew 27:57-66

“Martin Luther said himself that Saturday was the day that God himself lay cold in the grave. Friday was death, Sunday was hope, but Saturday was that seemingly ignored middle day between them when God occupied a dirty grave in a little garden outside Jerusalem. Saturday is about waiting, about uncertainty, about not knowing what’ll happen. Saturday is ambiguity. It’s about, as one theologian put it, muddling through when the future isn’t clear.” (*Christianity Today* – A.J. Sevoboda on April 2, 2015)

Lamentations 3 is a shocking narrative of suffering: God’s wrath, darkness without any light, wasting skin, broken bones, bitterness, tribulation, crooked path, affliction, homelessness, wormwood and gall. Lamentations 3 is also about hope: “*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning...*”

Matthew also writes of suffering. He, of course, tells of Christ’s suffering, but he also shares the suffering of Joseph from Arimathea, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Imagine the deep sense of hopelessness that was felt by the disciples, friends and family when her/his hope was on the cross. Imagine how Joseph must have felt when he took the dead body of Christ from the cross, wrapped His lifeless body in spices in linen cloth, and buried Him in the tomb. Darkness overtook them on this Holy Saturday. Those followers must have asked themselves “What do we do now?”

What makes us so different as Christians? The belief that out of that deep darkness comes hope. Holy Saturday reminds us of the uncertainty and the wait; but unlike the disciples during Jesus’ time, we know what Easter Sunday brings.

Jacqueline Chiavini

Ashes to Easter Overview

Ash Wednesday, February 14th

Join us for the imposition of ashes & communion at 12pm & 7:30pm.

Wednesday Evenings in Lent

*February 21st, February 28th, March 7th, March 14th, March 21st
(Not on March 28th, the Wednesday of Holy Week)*

Sunday Mornings in Lent

10:15 - 10:45am Sunday morning Adult Education

Sunday Afternoons in Lent

*February 18, February 25, March 4, March 11
Inquirers' | Newcomers' class | Adult Confirmation Class
This is a class for adults concurrent with youth confirmation class.*

The Stations of the Cross

Fridays at noon during Lent and Good Friday at 1pm

Gaude Concert

March 4 at 5pm in Church

Palm Cross Making & Seder Sunday, March 18th

*10:15am, all ages in Parish Hall for Palm cross making
Seder Sunday 4pm in Parish Hall, all ages*

Palm Sunday, March 25th

7:30, 9:00 & 11:00am

Blessing of the Palms, Procession into the church, Holy Eucharist with the Passion.

Holy Wednesday, March 28th

*7:30pm, Contemplative Liturgy — Lay Led— No Communion
5:30pm - 8:30pm — Reconciliation of the Penitent with Clergy*

Maundy Thursday, March 29th

7:30pm, Communion, Hand Washing & Stripping of the Altar

Good Friday, March 30th

*12pm & 7:30pm— Good Friday Liturgy
In church, no communion, 1 hour
1pm — Stations of the Cross, outside weather permitting*

Holy Saturday, March 31st

9am -- Brief, Holy Saturday service, no communion, in church.

Easter Vigil Saturday, March 31st

6:30pm — there will be incense outside, but no incense in the church.

Easter Sunday, April 1st

*7:30am — Communion with a touch of music
9am — Communion and Easter music
10am — Egg hunt for wee ones and older ones
11am — Communion with Easter music*