



Lenten Devotional

2024

Cover Art: Rouault, "Christ on Cross" (c. 1939)
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Dear Grace Family,

Here is a special gift for you: personal devotions from fellow believers. Many of these writers sit in the same pews as you do on Sunday morning. Some of them used to sit in those pews and are now cheering you on as they have become part of the heavenly cloud of witnesses.

The devotionals are meant as a guide through this season of Lent. Reading one every day will help you to pause and meditate on God's presence in your life.

May you sense God's presence and make your Lent holy.

Godspeed,

Fr. Frans+

Mite Boxes

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on"

Mark 12:41-43

For Children

It is a tradition at Grace, and many other churches, for children to bless others with small donations, prayers and actions during Lent. Monetary donations are placed in mite boxes that are collected at Easter. The offerings are then given to those in need in our community. Mite boxes are available at the back of the church.

For Adults

Even if there are no children in your home you can still be part of our mite box tradition. This year we have a calendar for adults with suggestions for prayers and small donations that you can follow. (These can also be used in families with children school age and older.) Look for the calendars at the back of the church, along with the children's mite boxes. Bring your donations to church on Easter Sunday.

Ash Wednesday, February 14

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:7-8

Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday converge this year. It seemed uncomfortably strange, until I really thought about it. What is Lent about if it isn't about love?

While I'm all for the warm, squishy feelings, the love experienced in Lent isn't that. If we've been around the Church long enough, we have probably heard it said that the kind of love we are called to as Christians, is not a feeling but a decision. We are called to love others as God loves us. The love of God is *agape* love. *Agape* means that we love people who cannot or will not give you anything in return. It calls us to show empathy and understanding and to extend grace, especially when it's hardest to give. *Agape* is sacrificial. Lent is a reminder that God "so loved the world."

Agape love does not come naturally to me, and sometimes it is hard work. Growing a deeper relationship with God is the only way I can even begin to express *agape* love. In God's love, we can begin to understand what this real love means. And those times I have decided on *agape*, when I felt anything but love, have brought me closer to God. As I take on Lenten spiritual disciplines this season, I ask God to show me his *agape* in my life and the life of others. And for God to give me opportunities, with his help, to show *agape* to all, even when it is difficult - especially when it is difficult.

When you examine your spiritual life this Lent, will you look for the presence of *agape* in your life?

Will you repent the times you have not shown *agape* to others, and ask God to help you see others as he sees them?

Deacon Mary Delancey

Thursday, February 15

From Lent 2010



The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

Luke 17:5-7

I remember the days when one of the fads was wearing a mustard seed around one's neck enclosed in a plastic bubble. I would ask the people I met who were wearing them, what they were for. The answer I generally got was, "That is my faith as a grain of mustard seed."

My thought was, "How can a mustard seed grow when it is enclosed in a lump of plastic." As I reflected on the statement of Jesus, it dawned on me that my faith did not have to be great. It had to fall into the ground and grow.

My faith cannot grow unless it falls into the ground. I have to try it out until I find that I can trust Jesus to be who he says he is, and that he will do what he says he will do.

Lent is a time to find out whether or not he is faithful. Try praying in the situations where we usually try manipulating others. Be sure that our prayer is not incantation seeking to get God to do our will, but prayer which asks that his will be done. Use the Lord's prayer as a pattern of prayer for those for whom you pray. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else!

When our mustard seed is planted, then it will grow, and we will come to know the presence and the love of the Lord who has called us to love Him, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Where do you need to plant your mustard seed?

How does your prayer life reflect the Lord's Prayer?

Friday, February 16

(Hagar) gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi ["well of the Living One who sees me"].

Genesis 16:13-14a

One of the ways God reveals himself to us is through his names, and I experienced this in a very meaningful way after my son-in-law passed away unexpectedly from a possible heart attack in late April, leaving behind my daughter and 3-year-old grandson. In my grief, I cried out to God, asking if he saw or cared how hard life would now be for my grief-stricken daughter and grandson. In my head I knew that God did indeed see and care. I could think of all the ways I have experienced his loving care throughout my life, but that still didn't silence the cries of my heart.

That week my devotional reading led me to the story of Hagar, Sarai's pregnant maidservant who had fled to the desert after being treated harshly by Sarai. In her distress, the angel of the LORD comes to her and tells her to return to her mistress, promising her that she will bear a son. He tells her to name him Ishmael, which means God hears, "for the LORD has heard of your misery" (v. 11). Hagar responds by giving the LORD the name El Roi, "the God who sees me." Although this is the only time this name for God appears in the Bible, we see throughout scripture how God sees us and hears us, knows us intimately, and lavishes his loving care on us.

God heard the cries of my heart and revealed himself to me as El Roi throughout the next three months as I stayed with my daughter and grandson in Milwaukee to help them during this difficult time. God showed me over and over again how he not only saw but very tenderly cared for my daughter and grandson as friends, family members, and even people they did not know showered them with cards and notes, prayers, meals, financial gifts, personal gifts, visits, invitations, practical help, and more. God also showed me how much he cared for me while I was away from home in a community where I knew no one.

I visited the neighborhood Episcopal church the weekend I arrived, and the clergy and congregation warmly welcomed me and immediately drew me into their close-knit community, making me feel seen and

Friday, February 16 (cont.)

loved. After this summer I know in my heart as well as my head that our God is a God who sees us and cares for us, who loves us deeply, and who will answer the cries of our hearts by revealing even more of himself.

What are some ways you have experienced that God sees and cares for you?

Is there someone you know who needs to hear that God sees and cares for them?

Cheryl Arnold

Monday, February 19

I loathe my very life; therefore, I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul. I say to God: Do not declare me guilty but tell me what charges you have against me. Does it please you to oppress me, to spurn the work of your hands, while you smile on the plans of the wicked?

Job 10:1-3

In this passage, we see Job expressing his deep anguish and frustration with his circumstances. He is questioning God and seeking understanding for the suffering he is experiencing. This is a common experience during the Lenten season, as we reflect on our own struggles and seek to understand God's purpose in them.

During Lent, we are called to examine our lives and confront our own sinfulness. We are reminded of our need for repentance and renewal. Just as Job pleaded with God to reveal any wrongdoing in his life, we too can come before God with open and honest hearts, acknowledging our own failings and seeking his forgiveness.

As we journey through Lent, let us be like Job, honest and raw in our prayers to God. Let us not be afraid to express our frustrations and doubts, but also let us hold onto hope and trust in God's faithfulness. Just as Job ultimately found restoration and redemption, we too can find healing and transformation through our relationship with God.

May this Lenten season be a time of deep reflection and renewal for each of us. May we draw closer to God and experience his grace and mercy in our lives. And may we emerge from this season with a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of God's love for us. Amen.

Have you examined your life?

Are you honest with yourself when you pray to God?

Jeff Kirk

Tuesday, February 20

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

Psalms 27:14

God has built the process of waiting into our lives. Almost everything we want, we have to wait for. We Americans hate to wait for anything, and perhaps that is one reason we do not embrace God well in our culture these days. But we have the church to help us.

I love how the Christian calendar has built waiting into the seasons of celebration and reflection. Advent builds our anticipation that God is with us. Christmas celebrates that our waiting and patience paid off with new life in Christ. Lent forces us to slow down our schedules and catch up to what is happening in our hearts. Easter embraces suffering in a way that pushes us to fresh hope, healing the pains we discovered during Lent. Pentecost reminds us that our power is found in the Holy Spirit, who has his own rhythm of giving us hope, taking away our rough spots, conforming us toward the image of God and waiting for our agreement of his work in our lives.

As I look back on my life, I see God's rhythms over the decades. My mother disciplined me to know God. My heart as a young man wavered and wandered and God let me go. Then he brought me back with genuine faith. Now he disciplines me to advance and retreat, move forward and sit a spell.

I see the Lord prospering me now after a season of waiting. His timing is always the best. I often do not like his timing. Thank God my life is in his hands and not my own. When the time is just right, when his work for a particular season is fulfilled, he moves me forward with a burst of optimism and productivity.

Even when I am sure to hit bumps in the road in the future, he will have a plan to move me through them or to have me wait again. Waiting on God never fails.

Tuesday, February 20 (cont.)

One day I will no longer need to wait on him. I will reach that eternal place where all of my waiting will have been redeemed for God's glory.

Take the time to wait on the Lord, my friends, and you will not be disappointed.

What are waiting on God for?

Are you willing to wait for his plan to come about? Why or why not?

Fr Brian Stankich⁺

Wednesday, February 21

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Matthew 6: 28,29

Yes, look at the lilies, the daisies, the phlox, whenever you are lucky enough to come upon them. Petals soft, hues ranging from delicate to intense, scattered along your path. Consider them as priceless gifts to lift you into the awareness that God has designed this day, this hour for you.

Listen to what those lilies have to say, "Look at me ... I am the fruit of the Lord's loving, creative heart. Stop a moment and drink in my gift to you. I am telling you that beauty abounds, you can find it everywhere, even in the midst of tangled weeds, sometimes thrusting up through littered cement, here in a crack, there in a dark alley."

Just walking my little white dog in the neighborhood, watching his delight in the treasures he finds under every insignificant leaf pile and feeling his boundless energy and awareness is for me a reminder of what joys life presents, and how amazing it is to be receptive to the little and big events surrounding us. We need to be aware of the treasures God gives us in the ordinary. Consider the beating of your heart, the wonder of a bird's flight, the twisting plot of a favorite mystery. I find God in all of these. And if I sound like "Pollyanna" one of my favorite childhood heroines, I can't help myself.

I find my joy in the world around me. Picking up a paintbrush gives me a rush and for that, and for the gift of imitating the beauty of God's creative essence is perhaps one of my greatest joys, I love to sit in front of an easel and feel the flow that comes from within and without. Time passes and I am unaware of the stresses that also are part of the heady cocktail of life. So it is in my life. God is right beside me, in the wonder of the mix of life, the good and the other.

Take a walk and find five perfect God gifts.

Patti Gilman

Thursday, February 22

The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still.

Exodus 14:14

During all stages of life, this verse serves as an anchor for our souls. It echoes the timeless truth that when we face overwhelming challenges, our role is not to rely solely on our strength but to surrender to God who fights on our behalf.

Being still is not passive; it's an act of trust in God's sovereignty. In the face of uncertainties, anxieties, or trials, it can be comforting to let go and give to God. This verse has been my comfort through this past year. Through many trials, I have felt the overwhelming presence of our Lord in mine and my family's life.

Recently in Children's Church our lesson was about trusting God, even though we can't see him. So we played a game, where the kids were separated into teams of two, one child was blindfolded and the other had to guide their partner through the obstacle course. One by one they completed, having to trust in each other to help them out. At the end I explained just as in this game, God is our partner, always guiding us through as long as we are still. So, let us embrace the peace that comes from trusting the God who fights for us, understanding that in stillness, we find our greatest strength.

How will you be still today?

Catie Hourigan

Friday, February 23

For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.

Hebrews 13:14-15

I have a design book that is much more than a design book. It is filled with testimonies of people from around the world who have created homes that reflect who they are. It is as much about the life they have lived as it is about their individual homes. Some homeowners have found tremendous healing in the process of building and living in their spaces. Others honor their family legacy as next generation occupants. The spaces are as unique as the individuals who curated them and as I read it, I can't get enough of the stories or the photographs.

These stories affirm what I already believe about home; that it matters deeply. That position does not mean that I am super tidy or that my sofas are stain-free (they are not), but I am very grateful that my home reflects our family well and provides a source of rest and connection for me. It is a privilege and a luxury to live in a place that provides comfort and tells our story, but I realize that my home here, although uniquely mine, is insufficient. Even the best earthly refuge is a mere reflection of the true home that awaits us: an immersive existence that we could not possibly create, but one that provides more rest and connection and natural light than any home on earth. Our forever, heavenly home is a place just right for each of us and it was created by the One who knows us better than we know ourselves. It is never too big or too small. Never too messy or too sterile. The table is always big enough and the food never runs out. It is our Father's House.

When we feel unsettled, uncomfortable, crave rest and long for comfort, let us remember that we are not yet home and look forward with hope knowing we will get there one day.

Sarah Hart

Saturday, February 24 - Sunday, February 25

But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now. He has never ceased working, and I too am working."

John 5:17

Anyone who grew up in the midwest or the north can recall the thrill of having a "snow day", a day when the buses could not get through so you heard those glorious words on the radio, No school today! It meant going back to bed or having cocoa while still in your jammies or watching cartoons. It meant, most of all, no work. Perhaps your parents could not get to their office, so no work for them either. Everyone had a day off.

What if God took a day off as well instead of working for us? Is there ever a moment when he abandons his duties and just kicks back? Is it always and forever just work, work, work for Him? Google some synonyms for work and you will find the words engaged, in action, laboring, on duty, occupied, plugging away. All of those describe him. Every single minute of every single day.

Remember the phrase, "no rest for the weary?" Does God ever get tired? Does he ever wish for a snow day when all of us are simply on our own, meandering through our busy little lives without his help? Or is he, like the post office, delivering his blessings no matter whether there is rain or snow or sleet or hail?

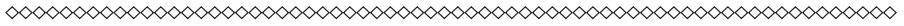
We all know the answers. God is right here with us. All. The. Time. Sometimes we are the ones who take a day off from God, too busy with our lives to pause and grasp what God is offering us. But there are no snow days for God. Ever. He is always working for us, in us, behind us, in front of us. If you open your eyes and your heart, you will find him there...working...just as he always will be.

God also calls us to rest. How do you balance a work ethic with taking proper rest?

Peg Hamilton

Monday, February 26

From Lent 2012



“Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. “

Matthew 13:9

Thinking through the scriptures, how many times did Jesus address the crowd at the end of one of his teachings with the above phrase? We know what he meant, but do we practice it with others; do we listen or just pretend to do so? Like many of our devotional times spent reading, do we rush through the words so we can get done and get on to something else, or do we take the time to delve for the true meaning?

The same thing with conversations with others; we think we know what they are saying and we want to jump in with our own thoughts, never hearing the speaker out, pushing our own agenda ahead of the speaker's. We are quick to say that we know what they are talking about because we had an experience just like the one they are trying to describe.

What would it cost us to just listen to the other person, to hear them out and let them have their say whether we agree or not? Maybe they want to get something off their chest and we should feel honored to be the one with whom they choose to talk.

Do you know someone who would appreciate it if you just listened to them, someone you can hear out without giving them advice?

What can you do to make someone feel like you really care by giving them your full attention when they talk? A spouse or child perhaps.

Deacon Mike Anderson
One of the Saints in Heaven

Tuesday, February 27

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

Psalm 121:7-8 T

For I the Lord your God, will hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Do not fear, I will help you."

Isaiah 41:13

Pathways. There are many pathways that we come across as we move along through life. We choose our pathways, sometimes choosing right, sometimes not. Sometimes there are huge obstacles along the path causing us to wonder, is this the way I am meant to go? I believe oftentimes these obstacles are the rough patches in our lives and if we can trust God to help us, we make our way through and ultimately find the path God may have intended for us right along.

I recently had an opportunity to share these thoughts with a younger family member who was wrestling with trying to determine which direction to go as he was transitioning from the teen years to adulthood. That time in a person's life can be very confusing. We talked about pathways, the paths we choose ourselves and the paths that God has for us. After much prayer and wandering through different options he has been able to choose a direction that he hopes is the right one and is going for it wholeheartedly.

Have you experienced obstacles along your path that turned out to be necessary in the long run?

Have you had an opportunity to help someone else navigate their path using prayer; asking God to help them find the way?

Janie Rubin

Wednesday, February 28

Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7

Asking and then having to wait for God to answer is the hardest part. However, I find that when I ask, just the act of verbally putting my request in give me an indescribable peace. It gives me that feeling of taking a deep breath and at the exhale getting a calm “I know it will be ok because God has it now” feeling.

Seeking for answers can be daunting specially when what we are seeking is not clear. God knows what is best for us, but we don't always have the clear view of what that may be. I asked a few years ago for something pretty big, way to big for me to figure out on my own, something that only by his divine intervention could have been resolved. I wanted the answer quickly because the issue was causing me anxiety and stress. I kept asking, and occasionally, I would remember to thank him in advance for the resolution even though I didn't see any sign. It took a few years for him to answer me, and it wasn't exactly the way I preferred to receive the answer. There was also a lesson for me to learn that I wouldn't have if the resolution would have been on my time frame, instead of God's.

Knock and it will be opened to you. This part of the verse gives me energy, stamina, and drive to keep going because the right opportunity, the right person, the right job will be revealed behind one of those doors. We have to keep knocking!! Giving God total control and believing that he will answer all our prayer seems too good to be true. He wants exactly that, give it to him, ask him for it, seek him out, knock and HE WILL ANSWER.

Vivian Barone

Thursday, February 29

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.

Habakkuk 2:20

Growing up in the church I have been taught from an early age just how important it is to spend time in prayer. Developing a personal relationship with Jesus and realizing the meaning of a devoted prayer and worship time each day took time, a lot of work and dedication to become the habit it is now.

Beginning each morning with a cup of tea and quiet time communing with my Lord, has now brought me to the point of recognizing, in a very tangible way, God working in my life. It is a joy to actually know and feel God's presence in all things directing me. God's constant working to teach and grow me in his love and recognizing my responsibility in being obedient. It is an honor, privilege and a joy to bring my loved ones, sometimes strangers and all types of situations to his throne each morning. It is a loving act to turn attention towards the creator of the universe and recognize, in all that vastness, that he knows me. Really knows me. What a blessing and what freedom to be dependent on God.

Do you have a daily time for prayer and devotion with God?

Have you recognized and thanked God today for working in your life?

Martha Slemmer

Saturday, March 2 - Sunday, March 3

Yet Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay and you our potter: we are all the work of your hand.

Isaiah 64:7

My parents got a divorce while my Mother was pregnant with me. My early years were fraught with abuse, emotional turmoil and financial distress. We never knew where our next meal would come from. When I was around 8 or 9 a small Baptist Church bus came to our neighborhood and I was curious. The man on that bus only asked me to accept Christ and in doing so God would release a lifetime of love. Was it that simple? Was this a trick? Do I trust a bus full of strangers? What was that feeling that blanketed me with cooling and soothing kindness? Something spiritually deeper happened to me on that stifling hot bus in August.

Years later I truly came to know that I was filled with the Holy Spirit. There was a force so powerful and in that moment I knew everything would be okay. It was instantaneous. No one in my family was religious and I would come to recognize that I had truly found a FATHER who would never leave me, always guide me and support me in ways I had not yet even begun to fathom. My Mother never remarried. During all of my adolescence, when in doubt and sadness because I was surrounded with friends who had 2 parents, I sought out more from Christ. From summer bible camps to deeper studies about Jesus's love I learned that I was no longer that fractured little boy. I had found the best Father of all!

How has the Holy Spirit touched your life?

Has the Lord helped you through difficult times?

Stephen (Scooter) Chapellie

Monday, March 4

From Lent 2014



*You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.*

Psalm 51:16-17

When I was a young boy growing up in Mobile, Lent didn't mean much to me. I was Baptist, and a Lenten observance was what my Catholic friends did. For me Ash Wednesday meant that Mardi Gras was over for another year, and heralded the countdown to Easter.

Giving up something for Lent wasn't part of my spiritual DNA. My best friend, Tony, always gave up candy. That is, until we went to the Roosevelt Theatre for a Saturday matinee of a Roy Rogers movie. One year his younger sister, Rita, gave up speaking to him. That, too, was short lived until he aggravated her.

It wasn't until I joined the Episcopal Church years ago, that Lent took on a special and sacred discipline for me. I realized that Lent is about giving up our "selves" to God. It's unnerving to even think about totally and completely giving my "self" to God. That means I have to give up those sins that have at times been part of my life all of my life.

If I give up whatever part of my "self" is interfering in my relationship with God, at the end of Lent there is no turning back. I cannot go back to being the person I was 40 days ago. If my purpose for observing Lent is to grow into a deeper relationship with God, I have succeeded.

What are you willing to give up so you can grow into a deeper relationship with God?

How far are you willing to go to allow God to fulfill His plan for your life?

Don Hires
One of the Saints in Heaven

Tuesday, March 5

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trusting in God, instead of depending on your own thoughts about what is happening and what you should do, is a conscious decision to have faith. Even though we know God loves us and is in control of everything, it is difficult to give up the idea that we can be in charge. Hard situations in life are opportunities to choose to rely on God. When I must make an important decision, I often go back and forth over the alternatives in my mind. However, I find that if I turn it over to God and look to Him for the answer, He will bless me with guidance. It is hard to relinquish the power I mistakenly think I have, but if I trust that God really has the power, I can begin to manifest a stable, positive attitude. I may not understand His actions, but it is enormously comforting to know that I can rely on God to be in charge instead of me.

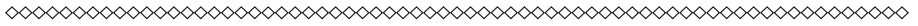
Where is God asking you to trust Him today?

Are you going to choose to rely on His power to show you which path to take?

Linda Winchenbach

Wednesday, March 6

From Lent 2009



For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Could you give up your son or daughter for some person you didn't know personally - maybe even a criminal - so that they would have a chance of going into Heaven? I, personally, have three daughters and if I were asked to give up any one of them I would first ask many questions. Who is this person? Is he really someone special? Is his life worth more than that of my daughter? What has he done that makes him worth saving? No, on second thought, I probably wouldn't ask questions. I'm sure I would just say, "No, I won't give her up."

Just think what God did for us! HIS ONLY SON! He gave up HIS ONLY SON! Do you know anyone who has lost a child? What would they do if they could get that child back? Would you blame them? Of course that isn't possible. However, it is possible for you to have everlasting life. All the Lord has asked of us to do is trust in Him. To believe in Him. To believe in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. That is all we are asked to do! It sounds easy enough doesn't it? And yes, how many of us have doubts? How many of us let others influence or make fun of our beliefs? How many of us stay home in bed it it's raining on a Sunday morning?

1. What is the greatest loss you've experienced? What made it so difficult?
2. How did God meet you in that experience? What did He do for you?

Mary Jane Gale
One of the Saints in Heaven

Thursday, March 7

Give thanks to the Lord...

Psalm 136

“... morning by morning, new mercies I see. All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided ...”. This music played on a loop in my mind as I contemplated where I have seen God at work in my life. Well ... here I am to praise Him, years past my Biblical “Best by” date and still “learning and discovering”! He is present in every breath I breathe, but I think you appreciate the same for yourself and would like something more specific.

I have been lost - physically lost - several times in my life: on a mountain in Georgia, a swamp in Ft Meyers, and also off the Great Wall in China. These adventures started off well, with a clear trail and good intentions, but at some point I strayed until there seemed no path to follow. That is a very scary place to be - to realize you can't solve the problem and admit it to God in desperate prayer. I say in praise that at these and other times He has made clear a way I could not see until I put my trust in Him alone. And the loop plays on: “Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!”

Do you seek His will in the choices you make?

How often do you thank him for his mercies, great and small?

Pae Barberie

Friday, March 8 (cont.)

to know prayer as talking WITH him rather than just talking TO him. I hope one day to be attentive enough to follow him ALL the time and not just some.

Do you have a time that you spend alone with God alone or with one or two others?

Do you seek to hear what God is speaking to you when you read the Bible?

Fr. Al Durrance
One of the Saints in Heaven

Saturday, March 9 - Sunday, March 10

Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:34

How do I believe that God is at work in my life? The short answer would be, stop worrying. Just like most things, this is easier said than done. Working on not worrying is not new for me. It has been a focus over the past few years.

There was a day, in between sessions at work a few months back, where I felt God lay a message on my heart. It was not audible, but the message was, "You try to set up and/or fix things that are in the future so that it is easier when you get there. What you fail to realize, is how much harder that makes the here and now."

This struck me. A phrase (and a great book) came to mind, "Be Where Your Feet Are." Or, simply be present. God knows the beginning and the end. I don't. He has us right where we need to be. Sure, it's wise to project future plans for my life that are healthy, but I also have to realize that control over said plans is simply an illusion. When I am fully present, I am whole. In my mind, that gives God the chance to do his best work, through me. If I am future tripping in my head, how can He use me in the moment?

Thus, the best thing I can do, is work on clearing out healthy space for Him to work. I pray that He uses me to continuously walk on paths of healing with others, without worrying about what comes next.

Where in your life are you worrying and trying to control the most?

In this area, is it fair to say, this is where you trust God the least?

Matt Merchant

Monday, March 11

From Lent 2014



The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.

Mark 12:31

Do not leave me empty, Lord. Use me as a flowing gourd.
To quench the thirst of those in need.
Allow me, Lord, to intercede, Thy love to show in every deed.

Should I falter and complain, feel consumed by those in pain.
Remind me by thy gentle care.
We're not given more than we can bear.
In sickness, sorrow or despair.

Open wide my heart and ear. For all who need me to hear
of wounds to body, heart and soul.
To them I say, "Sip of my bowl"... potion served: This is my role.

Love thy neighbor as thyself.

Who is the Lord calling me to pour into?

Who has poured into me that I can thank today?

Nadya Brandon
One of the Saints in Heaven

Tuesday, March 12

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

This keeps happening to me...! Sometimes I sing to the Lord on the way to Church, and not a coincidence, that same song will be in the service!

Reflective of human experience is that powerful feeling is expressed in song. Who hasn't rejoiced over a new baby, celebrating tiny details and digits, accompanying a lullaby...or attending a wedding where song is incorporated...And often during worship, we sing to the Lord. In this passage the person of God is showing us how God feels about us, if we are his.

"He is mighty" (The Sovereign God)

"He will save" (Admittedly, we humans need saving, and he will do it, implying a forward, continuous motion).

"Joy" is repeated 3 times with varied meaning: "Rejoice" (To spin around with ecstatic motion, or to dance). The second "joy" (This occurs without it being at another's expense, or wholesome). The third "joy," (This means great, and describes singing as a shrill, loud, shout of triumph or celebration!)

"He will rest in his love," (Rest is settled on this matter, not wavering, but indicates an active rest, meaning to plow, to engrave, to fabricate, to produce something.) Resting and active seem like opposites. Are we firmly planted, yet actively growing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

I continue in my journey of faith, rejoicing that I have a Lord God who loves me, and isn't finished with me yet! I am excited to be part of the family of God, here at Grace!

How does it make you feel to know that God sings over you with rejoicing? How does it change your perception of God, or yourself?
(Romans 8:1: There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.)

Tuesday, March 12 (cont.)

How can God's rest over us be settled, but active? God asks us to "labor to enter into his rest. What do you think he means? (*Hebrews 4:9-11: There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*)

How does 1 Thessalonias 5:24 (*Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*) reflect the idea of the first part of this verse, that says he is mighty and he will save?

Michelle Curry

Thursday, March 14

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6

In the past year, God has been very much at work in restoring balance in my life. At times, I have seen myself as on a boat drifting down a very winding river. I can't seem to get the knack of being a good helmsman – I am constantly letting the boat drift too close to one bank or the other. Each time this happens is stressful as course corrections are nerve racking and time consuming. And, I never feel very good about myself or my navigational skills. Peace is elusive as one must constantly be on the lookout for rocks, tree branches, and the other obstacles that abound on the river.

When I go to church, take part in a Life-on-Life group, or participate in a discussion at an Alpha meeting I begin to understand that my basic premise is what is really the issue. I realize that I haven't been asking the key question – must I be the helmsman? I remember then what I was asked during my undergraduate college years by Campus Crusade. Their first question was always, "Who is on the throne, you or God"? I realize, these many years later, that when I let God take the helm I sleep better, have time to enjoy a sunset, and generally take more joy in life. I tell Him what I want and need, request guidance in doing His will, ask for direction, and turn the helm over to him.

Do you find that it is possible to turn over the helm to God as you travel through life?

How would your life be different if you were able to do this?

Drick Heitman

Friday, March 15

*Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him and he will do this:
He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn.*

Psalm 37: 4-6

I hate to cherry pick sections of scripture, as this one talks an awful lot about avenging our enemies, too... but this passage has come to my mind several times throughout the past year. The faith tradition in which I was raised put a premium on “professional ministries” such as missionary and pastor. The rest of us were kind of second string players, at best, not quite as blessed with that extra special favor of God. And so, whether I fully bought into it, my careers working in Christian higher education and as the director of a Christian non-profit at least had a hint of that favor encircling them.

But there is always a psychological residual. One of my personal passions over the past twenty-five years has been studying and collecting art by a group of artists who are not widely known, though actually fairly influential. When I started to pursue this study in a more rigorous way over the past year (at the urging of others) I did so with some hesitation. It seemed kind of a selfish and “worldly” endeavor. Once started, the project snowballed and the support and encouragement overwhelmed me. What I realized was that God gave me the passion for this and would bless my efforts accordingly. God has shown up at every stage to remind me that the whole of creation is His and shining a light on every aspect of its beauty pleases Him.

With what passion has God gifted you?

Are you leaning into that passion to let God’s pleasure flow through you?

Tyrus Clutter

Saturday, March 16 - Sunday, March 17

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.

Isaiah 43:18

I saw a meme on Facebook about a person just about to go to sleep when their brain kept reliving something stupid that they did or said years ago. I thought I was the only one plagued with stupid things that I said or did, but if there are memes about this on Facebook, it must be fairly common. For years these stupid incidences have bothered me to the point that I have had a hard time pushing them away. Recently I was contemplating the Bible verse from Isaiah telling us not to dwell on the past. I decided then and there to take these stupid things said and done in the past and let God help me with them. God didn't press the delete key, because those memories are still there, but I no longer keep myself awake at night fretting over them.

On a more serious note, there are often very painful, serious events in the past. Sometimes these involve hurtful things that may have happened which were caused by another person. There have been several sermons on this very topic and how we must let go of these things by forgiving those who trespass against us. This is very difficult to do, particularly when the adversary is far away or maybe even dead. But if we can apply the same verse from Isaiah and ask God for help, we can free ourselves from carrying around these painful events.

Have you been able to let painful past events in your life go?

Were you able to find peacefulness with God's help?

Janie Rubin

Tuesday, March 19

For I know the plans I have for you.

Jeremiah 29:11

A drive to Jacksonville with my sister-in-law changed my life. She talked about her teaching job, the students, the teachers she worked with, and how much she enjoyed it. By the time we arrived back in Ocala I wanted what she had.

I was a high school teacher. That's how I thought of myself. I never considered teaching elementary students, but Grace School had a middle school and I went to apply. The only opening was third grade. I never wanted to be a third grade teacher. With few other teaching options available I decided how difficult could it be.

Turns out I was wrong. I was meant to be a third grade teacher. I discovered teaching third grade was interesting and fun and so were the students. Third graders still like school and learning. They are very different from high schoolers. The teachers, principal, and parents I worked with were wonderful and supportive. I taught third grade for 13 years there before I retired. I enjoyed every year and every class.

Teaching at Grace School meant going to chapel each week with my students. I felt drawn to the historic church and worship service. Soon my husband and I moved our membership to Grace Church, where we worship today. Only looking back did I see God's plan.

Are you paying attention when God moves in your life?

Are you listening for the still small voice of God?

Eleanor Simons

Wednesday, March 20

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

John 6:35

Are you a "foodie" like me, having an appetite for great tasting foods for the pleasure of it? Often, even when full, the voice in my head tempts me with "Yeah but it is so good, just one more bite, it won't kill ya." I bet Eve was a foodie. Satan tempted her to take fruit from the tree. He used her "pleasure for food" to entice her to take and eat.

That subtle invitation deceived and robbed Eve of the life God intended her to have. Eve's "foodie" appetite caused her to experience rejection, and dejection from her home. First Corinthians 11:23-25 talks about another betrayal and deceit that captured another poor soul, Judas. Judas' appetite, be it coveting money, thirty pieces of silver or feeling betrayed himself, fell for the tempter's lie and won for himself a life ending in suicide.

On the night of Jesus' betrayal, he instructed his disciples, as he took a loaf of bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way he took the cup also, after supper saying "this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me..." Jesus said "take and eat." Sound familiar?

Take and eat, three words, the same words used against Eve that brought shame, sin, and death, used by Satan to ensnare, imprison, and betray; Jesus now uses to serve as in invitation for redemption and life. Jesus, the bread of life, is the counter to the lies of Satan. Jesus' words of "take and eat" are given for inclusion, freedom, and life; not expulsion and dejection as Eve and Judas experienced.

Each week at the rail, as we take and eat the bread of life, Christ disrupts and destroys the power those sly three little words once had over us and we come full circle into the finished work of the cross that offers completion and wholeness in Christ alone. Same three little words, once used for death; now used for life!

Wednesday, March 20 (cont.)

Are you hurt, ashamed, betrayed, deceived? Are you imprisoned by condemnation of past sins, old hurts, lies? Have you, like me, been deceived in believing: "I am not good enough", "if they really knew me", or like Eve, "it's just an apple" or "it won't hurt you".

Jesus redeems all things, Come and See; Take and Eat.

Deacon Susan Moorehead

Thursday, March 21

And he opened up his mouth and taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:8

In February 2020, before the world shut down, I was given a rare opportunity to visit Israel. Frans worked for an organization that was meeting in Jerusalem for a tour and conference, and I kissed our small children goodbye, jumped on a plane to Tel Aviv, and took a bus into Jerusalem to join him for the tour. I was very aware of what an incredibly rare and special opportunity I was being given. I longed to experience each day of the five-day tour as fully as possible. On day three of the tour, our bus stopped on a mountain next to a large convent. A winding path took us to the place Jesus had given the Sermon on the Mount. Below, stretched the Sea of Galilee. The place was full of tourists climbing around like ants; the holy place was filled with languages and people and gold and stone monuments. I wanted desperately in my mind's eye to see simple, human Jesus teaching a crowd of spiritually hungry nobodies. But I couldn't. The tour moved on, and after mentally taking a snapshot, I left the place where Jesus began to teach about an upside-down kingdom, of which he was King. I wanted so badly to experience Israel like I did Disney: to be seeped in the magic of the place. But I was tired, so tired. The experience, as beautiful as it was, couldn't permeate the reality of how tired I was in February of 2020.

Nearly four years later, I am studying Jesus' upside-down kingdom in a Bible study. One of the texts is Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount. I begin reading, and suddenly I am on the physical hillside in Israel, the one I saw on the tour. My imagination is recreating the scenery my tired eyes physically saw four years ago. I realize that God allowed me to absorb some of that moment and store it away for today: a time in life where I am less exhausted. This is what Jesus is teaching me: he's a committed teacher, committed to showing me himself, and he's committed to showing you himself. He's involving you in his kingdom work, even if you are too tired and can't see how in your present reality. Even if it means waiting for the right moment.

Thursday, March 21 (cont.)

What moments do in the past do you wish you could have been more present for, but for some reason were too tired, or sad, or sick to be fully there? Ask God to redeem that moment. Recognize that God was in the moment with you and ask him to bring his life and resurrection power to your memories.

Erin van Santen

Friday, March 22

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Psalm 19:1

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his Heaven—
All's right with the world! – Robert Browning

Since learning this poem in my Junior year of high school, I've mentally recited it upon awakening each morning. Long before I found Jesus I was enthralled by the glorious Creation of the Father which we inhabit. The Psalmist sings out. The prophet Isaiah (40:26) proclaims, "Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing." And in the Epistle to the Colossians (1:16), St. Paul asserts "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him."

So where do I see God at work in my life? Everywhere! Were I to envision my life from birth until today as a line, it would be anything but straight: a crazy zig-zag squiggle with each change in direction being a life-changing decision I made. My wife Janie's would be similar. Yet somehow God managed to bring us together and combine our divergent life-lines into one. Thanks be to God!

Do you take time daily to enjoy the beauty of God's Creation?

Can you find worship in a flower?

Dave Rubin

Palm Sunday, March 24

*The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns,
where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.*

Psalms 65:8

Always be on the lookout for the presence of wonder.

E.B. White, author of "Charlotte's Web"

About ten years ago, I began hearing about the spiritual practice of choosing a word for the year. The idea came from a pastor who wanted to see his congregation grow in their walk with Christ. He noticed that people quickly gave up on their list of New Year's resolutions, so he worked with a life coach to come up with an alternative. He said, "Lose the long list of changes you want to make this year and instead pick one word that represents what you most hope God will do in or through you in the year ahead. Let it become the lens through which you examine your heart and life for an entire year. As you focus on your word, you position yourself for God to form your character at a deep, sustainable level." Several of my friends adopted this practice, and after seeing how they grew and changed, I decided to join them in prayerfully choosing a word for the year. Each word has shaped me and changed me during my spiritual journey.

My word last year was wonder. Franciscan priest Richar Rohr writes, "I may be oversimplifying, but I think there are basically two paths that allow people to have a genuine spiritual experience: the path of wonder and the path of suffering." My year included both wonder and suffering, and both shaped my walk with God. Wonder begins with beholding—being present to one's surroundings, paying attention, savoring a moment. Beholding leads to wonder, which has many synonyms including awe, marvel, astonishment, delight, joy, reverence, and amazement. This kind of wonder then leads to praise and gratitude. Another synonym for wonder is curiosity, so a curious wonder can lead to new learning.

I

often experience wonder through nature, beauty, and the arts, but while spending last summer in Wisconsin, I experienced wonder with a group of believers at a contemplative Eucharist service on Wednesday mornings at the Episcopal church in my daughter's neighborhood.

Palm Sunday, March 24 (cont.)

The service began with quiet instrumental music, and then the weekly gospel passage was read aloud in two different translations, followed by a time of reflective silence. After we shared the Eucharist with each other, we adjourned to a nearby room to discuss the gospel reading over tea. We wrestled with some difficult questions and came away with a deeper understanding of the passage. Our quiet reflections and rich discussions centered on the gospel led all of us to a renewed sense of wonder and awe for who Jesus is. I carried this deepened wonder and awe home with me and know I never want to lose it.

What has led you to experience wonder in your walk with God?

Will you choose a word for the year? How would you like to see God use this word in your life?

Cheryl Arnold

Monday in Holy Week, March 25

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand hold me.

Psalms 139: 9,10

To take hold of his mighty right hand is all in all to me. The world in all its wonders and delights as well as its darkness and despair is unfathomable to me without my hand in his.

Each day brings with it possibilities to explore either direction. Do I reach for my devotional upon waking to the day, or do I switch on the blaring news of the day on the television? I find light and direction in reading the Word and wrapping myself in timeless truth, the whole day takes on its luster, no matter how many rain clouds or difficulties may hover about. The tumult rages on once the news of the day filters in, but the security of that strong ever present right hand dulls the reality and even helps balance the brokenness with insight.

So much in life is beyond our control. It is good to remember that the big stuff is in God's domain, yet he leaves us the opportunity to handle our own lives. He gives us power to make our own victories or our own defeats. The choices are before us, some stark and obvious, some not so much. Holding that right hand I find it feels just right to hug that baby, take cookies to the newcomers on the block, visit a home bound friend, fill the bird feeder, recycle my little coffee pods and to write my congressman instead of ranting my ire. It all starts with God and I find him when I seek him, in writings, in the world, right where I am, holding my hand.

Do you have his hand?

Patti Gilman

Tuesday in Holy Week, March 26

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

Romans 8:28

This scripture is on a plate standing in our kitchen, so I see it many times each day. It's a scripture that brings me joy and comfort, kind of a physical reminder of what I know in my heart. My friends who know me well have heard me say that "trust" is my forever word, I trust completely in my Lord. There is no doubt in my mind that God is continually working in all parts of my life since I can't possibly do life without Him. I'm just not capable. John 15:5 says "Yes, I (Jesus) am the vine, you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

Through prayer and the study of God's Word, I try to invite God into my life. I am very far from perfect, so this includes asking for forgiveness and guidance on a daily basis. I am humbled and blessed by the sacrifice Jesus made, taking on my sin so I can have an amazing personal relationship with God. Hebrew's 13:21 says "may He equip you with all you need for doing His will. May He produce in you through the power of Jesus Christ every good thing that is pleasing to Him." I love feeling God's presence in my life, knowing He always wants what's best for me...always trusting in Him.

Is there a particular scripture that reminds you of God's presence in your life?

What are you doing when you feel closest to God?

Diane Taylor

Wednesday in Holy Week, March 27

I know what it is to be in need and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength... and my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:12-13 & 19

I'm sure that each of us can look back and recall major instances where it's easy to see how God has been working in our lives. These could be times when He's rescued us from perilous situations, provided much needed gifts, healed us, or given us answers we've needed. Most of us though, don't often stop to think about how God has been working in our everyday, ho-hum existence when emergency rescues don't seem to be necessary. Even though we may not recognize His presence, nonetheless He's there quietly fixing our problems and clearing our paths of difficulties we didn't even know existed or those that will come to surface.

He's helping me to stay strong against temptations and He points me in the right direction when I wander off the path I should be on. He encourages me to learn more about His teachings and to abide by them. He rewards me for my efforts and He fills me with peace and joy as I try to live according to His Word. He's there with patience and love as I attempt to move forward in my spiritual journey.

To answer the question, "Where do you see God working in your life?" isn't difficult. All I have to do is reflect on the things I have, who and what I am. All I have to do is reflect on who heals me, who loves me unconditionally, who forgives all my iniquities, who supplies all my needs and everything else I enjoy in my life. God is with me, working in me every moment of every day, providing protection, comfort, encouragement, healing, and so many other things I need or want, most of the time without my asking him for assistance. He's our God, our Heavenly Father, our "Abba". And he loves us.

Wednesday in Holy Week, March 27 (cont.)

Do you take time to focus on what God is doing for you as you rush through your daily activities, or do you think you did it all by yourself?

Are you grateful enough to take time to thank God for the work He does in your life?

Wade White

Maundy Thursday, March 28

The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

1 Samuel 3:10

When we heard this scripture read in church just a few weeks ago, I found myself smiling, not in amusement but in recognition. I so see myself in Samuel. I remember many years just sleeping away. Maybe not sleeping in the Temple of the Lord, but metaphorically sleeping on the floor.

There were times when I would hear that voice calling me, not in my ear but in my heart. But, like Samuel, I went to the things and people that I thought were speaking to me. They never seemed to have anything to say that really spoke to me or were in the end meaningful. That voice would come back again.

When Samuel didn't respond, God got his attention another way. I love how in the story the Lord came to Samuel and stood there. It is such a wonderful image to me. God is so persistent in his desire for us to know him. I'd like to think that God came and stood near me, calling to me. If I wouldn't come near to him, he would come near to me.

It took me a very long time to recognize God's voice. My interaction with God was nothing as dramatic as Samuel's. I had to learn that God speaks to me according to what he knows is best for me according to time and circumstances. He has used reading the Bible and praying quietly to speak to me. And he has used his church by leading me into friendships and counsel that have helped me know that what I heard was from God. I am so thankful that God in his faithfulness stood by me until I finally heard him, and has not left my side.

How do you hear God's voice? Do you take time to listen?

What did you do this Lent to hear what God speaks to you? What did he say?

Deacon Mary Delancey

Good Friday, March 29

Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

For me, Matthew 11:28 is one of the most relieving sentences in the Bible. One part of me that whoever may be reading this can identify with, is how we all have good days and bad days. The bad days can easily leave us feeling weary and burdened. Further, if we have enough bad days, it seems we can feel this way for seasons at a time.

The good news is, Jesus tells us how, when we go to him (especially in these seasons), he will give us rest. To take this further, He does not need us to feel great, try to be perfect, or anything related to this. In fact, he is known for loving the broken the most. And, this is who he often uses.

So, wouldn't it be fair to say, when we are in our seasons of despair, this is the best time to look at him to do great things in our lives? Yes, even in the trying seasons. Am I the only one that feels "less than" in those seasons? Well, this is our cue to realize that God is most favorable in our lives when we are suffering. Speaking of cues, I have noted and used a personal mental cue on my difficult mornings, "I have Jesus right in my back pocket (or heart). So no matter what happens today, I just need to remember that."

The good news, he always comes through. These considerations, I believe, are how he has been working in my life this past year. Time to lay our burdens to rest and embrace the moments and/or seasons where we are weary.

Are you in a season of feeling burdened and/or weary or can you remember when you were?

Are you able to dig deep and find the strength to endure and trust that He is right in the thick of it with you and is waiting to wrap his arm around your shoulder as soon as you notice?

Matt Merchant

Silent (Holy) Saturday, March 30

So Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus' body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

Matthew 27:59-60

There's a book on our shelf entitled *Easter is Tomorrow* by A.F. Troost. The content of the book focuses on the Saturday right before Easter, sometimes known as "Silent Saturday." For the disciples this was a day of sadness and despair. They did not know that resurrection was just around the corner. Their hero was gone, and what was left were shattered dreams.

From a divine perspective, Silent Saturday is a good day. In Jesus' time, this was the Sabbath. The seventh day. What did God do on the seventh day? Genesis 1 tells us that he rested from his good work. Silent Saturday represents something similar. God rested from his good work. Sin and death had been defeated. God knew something that Jesus' disciples did not: resurrection, new life, was just around the corner.

There can be seasons in our lives that we feel exactly what the disciples felt on Silent Saturday, when we are confronted with sickness, unbearable suffering, or our own mortality. We too wait for Christ to come, to take away our hardship, our tears. More than that, we wait for him to reign forever and us with him. Indeed, Easter is Tomorrow. But since it is not yet tomorrow, what comforts us in this long day? Let me give two suggestions.

First, we hold on to what God has spoken. He will come again and He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away (Revelation 21:4).

Silent (Holy) Saturday, March 30 (cont.)

Second, there is no better waiting posture than a singing one. May these words comfort you today:

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here in the love of Christ I stand

Fr. Frans van Santen⁺

Notes

Notes

Notes

Lent, Holy Week and Easter Services

Ash Wednesday, February 14

7:30am and Noon

Palm Sunday, March 24

8:00am and 9:45am (Procession)

Maundy Thursday, March 28

Service with Foot Washing-7:00pm

Overnight Prayer Vigil ending in

Morning Prayer-9:00am

Good Friday, March 29

Service-Noon

Meditation and Prayer

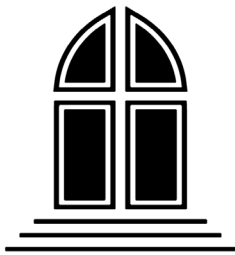
1:00pm-3:00pm

Stations of the Cross-6:00pm

Easter Sunday, March 31

Great Vigil-6:30am

Easter Eucharist-10:00am



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