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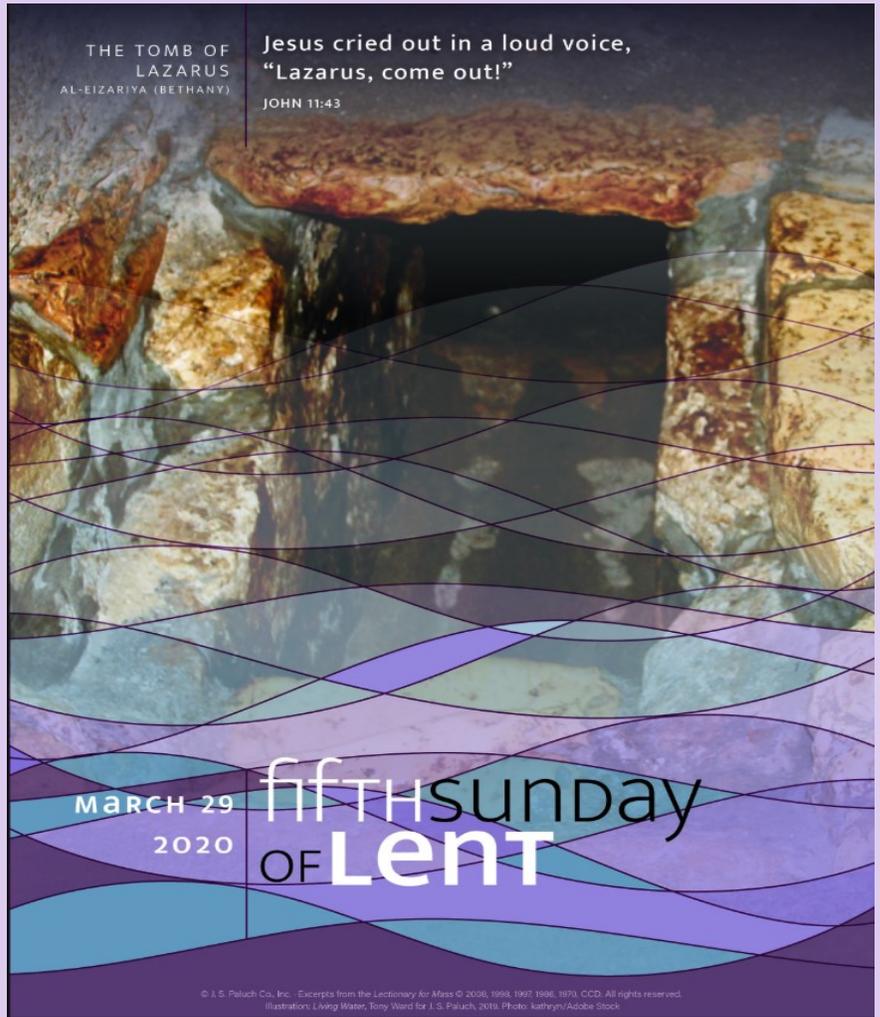
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MARCH 29
2020

fifth Sunday
OF LENT

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ASCENSION CATHOLIC SCHOOL
www.ascensioncatholic.org
U.S. Department of Education
School of Excellence
Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade

FAITH FORMATION

Religious Education

Pre-K3- Gr. 3 Tuesdays, 2:00-3:30pm
Pre-K3- Gr. 6 Tuesdays, 4:00 - 5:15 p.m.
Pre-K3- Gr. 6 Wednesdays, 4:00 - 5:15 p.m.
Gr. 1-6 Wednesdays, 6:15 - 7:30 p.m.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Ascension Catholic Life Teen

Sundays 6:45-8:30pm
Edge (Grades 7&8) Wednesdays 6-7:30pm

Ascension Thrift Store: 259-7291
Ascension Social Concerns: 259-5685
Religious Articles Gift Shop
Open after all weekend Masses

SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Saturday Vigil Mass

4:30 pm

Sunday Masses

7:30 am

9:30 a.m. (free childcare) 
(choir)

11:30 am (free childcare)

5:30 pm

(Contemporary Music)

Weekday Masses

Monday-Friday: 7:30 am

Sat. 9:00 am

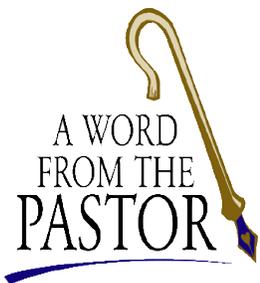
Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday: 3:15 - 4:25 pm

Wednesday: 5:00 pm

(or by appointment)

As a good steward of the Lord's blessings, please remember to consider your Parish Family or School Endowment in your Last Will and Testament.



- ◆ Jesus, Mary and Martha Weeping
- ◆ Dealing with the Loss of a Loved One
- ◆ Lazarus Come Forth, a reflection by Fr. Denis McBride, C.Ss.R
- ◆ 8 Things the Coronavirus Should Teach Us
- ◆ A reflection Poem on the COVID-19

In the Gospel for this Fifth Sunday of Lent, we get to look in on three people grieving. Martha and Mary are grieving the loss of their brother Lazarus. Jesus, too, weeps when he hears the news (John, Chap.11).

I wrote the following article on dealing with the loss of a loved one some years ago. I have received very positive feedback on the article—email messages from as far away as Australia and many parts of our country. If you think the article might be of help to a friend or loved one, please pass it along to them. In this article, we will look at:

- ◆ Common feelings experienced after the loss of a spouse
- ◆ 14 challenges to be faced
- ◆ 12 things to remember about the grieving process
- ◆ 5 helps in the grieving process
- ◆ 5 signs that healing is occurring

Common feelings experienced when a spouse dies

When someone close to us dies, we may be very surprised or even scared by the thoughts, feelings and reactions we experience. Hence, it may be helpful to know what thoughts, feelings and reactions are *normal* and frequently experienced by people who have lost a loved one, especially a spouse.

During a time of loss, we can experience a wide range of emotions with varying degrees of intensity. In a time of important personal loss, it is as if a part of us has died. Many people who lose a spouse or best friend feel that they have lost their soulmate, the one with whom they felt emotionally safe. There is an unbelievable sense of emptiness: empty house, empty arms, empty heart. There may be feelings of anger at God for taking our loved one, anger at church, doctors, family, friends, boss and co-workers. We may even be angry at our loved one for abandoning us. We may be angry at ourselves for crying in public—we think we should be stronger. We may be

jealous of others when we see that they possess what we have lost. We may feel a loss of meaning. Why get up and go on? We may even hope for death and may have passing thought about ending our life.

We may feel disoriented, off-balance, confused, forgetful, unable to focus on anything. We may think we are going crazy because we thought we heard the voice of our deceased loved one or sensed that he/she was in the room with us. We may have a yearning to speak to the person even months after the death or to prepare his/her favorite food, etc. We may be unable to sleep and, hence, feel continuously exhausted, with little or no energy to do anything. Going to church, to the store and to social functions without “our other self” may be very difficult. We may feel very alone and like a “fifth wheel” at social gatherings. We may be hurt by well-intentioned but insensitive remarks that people make. We may experience a degree of moodiness and snap at people for no reason.

If we live alone, we will most likely feel a terrible emptiness in our home. The silence may be awful and the evenings very lonely. We may experience long sleepless nights. The loneliness may be unbearable. We may feel sorry for ourselves and ask over and over, “Why me?” “Why did I lose out? Why did God take my loved one when so many terrible people are still alive?” None of the above thoughts or feelings are comfortable. In fact, all of them are quite painful but we need to remember that they are also a normal part of the grieving process for people who have experienced the death of a loved one, especially the death of a spouse.

Reflection question: Which of the above named feelings do you often experience?

Negotiating 14 challenges

As we struggle to face and deal with the death of a loved one, it may be helpful to name some of the challenges or tasks that grieving people have to face and negotiate.

1. Dealing daily with the roller coaster of feelings: sadness, loneliness, anger, guilt, jealousy, depression, tiredness, confusion, endless crying, emptiness
2. Tackling the stacks of paperwork, paying the bills, redoing the Will
3. Coping socially—hating it when one more person asks: “How are you?” but feeling angry if they don’t ask; going to church and social functions alone
4. Caring for our emotional and physical health
5. Celebrating anniversaries, birthdays, holidays and other special occasions
6. Disposing of our loved one’s clothes and belongings
7. Visiting the cemetery or Memorial Garden
8. Deciding whether or not to wear our wedding ring

9. Adjusting to financial changes. This is especially stressful when the death of a loved one means a serious loss of income.

10. Relating to others. The death of a loved one can seriously affect the way parents, siblings, children and friends relate to each other.

11. Learning to take charge of all the “stuff” our loved one used to handle

12. Living daily with what seems to be an unbearable, emotional pain; facing the grief without denying it or shelving it

13. Being open to meeting new friends and making a life for ourselves without our lost loved one

14. Re-negotiating our relationship with God

Perhaps you can add other challenges and tasks to the above list which I would appreciate your sharing with us.

Reflection question: Which of the abovenamed challenges especially apply to you in your grief process?

12 important things to remember about the grieving process

1. Grief work, though very painful, is good and holy. Jesus tells us: “*Blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted*” (Matt 5:5). Grief is the way God intended for us to deal with loss. It is nature’s way of healing a broken heart. The world’s way is denial, telling us to “move on” even before we have started to grieve. Grief work (and it is work!) is the *only* thing that will heal our loss or at least help us to live with it. *Jesus wept* when he heard about Lazarus’ death. His tears and ours are holy and sacred and not something to be embarrassed about. In his book *Life after Loss*, Bob Deits says that grief “*is the last act of love*” that we give to a deceased loved one. Deits encourages people to “*wear their grief with pride*” rather than deny it. Pain is, at least at first, the only thing that is left after our beloved is gone. We tend to want to hold on to it.

2. Each person’s grief process is *unique* and *different* for at least two reasons. *First*, we are each different from everyone else. We bring to our grieving a unique history. For example, we may or may not find it easy to *name* and *express* our feelings. We may or may not have grieved previous losses. We may have a history of facing or avoiding difficult issues. *Second*, each grieving process is unique and different because of the *nature of the relationship* we had with the person we have lost. Each relationship has its own texture and history, all of which will play out in the grief process. For example, a wife may be very angry that her husband kept her in the dark about their finances or never let her drive their car.

Another survivor may have shared everything with his/her spouse and they may have gone everywhere together. Such a survivor will most likely miss his/her spouse everywhere. So, while grieving people have lots of similar experiences, each grieving experience is *unique* because of who we are and because of the *nature* of the *relationship* we had with the person we lost.

3. The vast majority of people know little or nothing about the grief process. That is why people say insensitive things like: “It’s been a month—it’s time to move on” or “You need to quit all this crying and get hold of yourself.” Non-grievers want you to be over with your grief much sooner than you are ready. When they ask you how you are doing, they usually want you to say, “Fine.” Most people are uncomfortable with grief.

4. There is no correct timetable to grief work. Each person must be allowed to grieve at his/her own pace. People who move through a loss rather quickly are not necessarily superior or less caring. Likewise, those who take more time are not necessarily inferior or more caring.

5. *Time alone* does not heal a loss. Time gives us distance from a loss, but not healing. Grief work is work. The normal grieving process takes time, effort, tears, prayer and the support of others. When we feel bad about feeling bad, we must remember that if we had a broken leg, we would not feel guilty about taking the time necessary to heal. Why should it be different with a broken heart? Our broken heart also deserves its healing period—even if it takes several years. Certain physical injuries take some time to heal.

6. Grief work is messy and uncomfortable. We may take two steps forward and three back. Our grief will rise up within us at the most unexpected and inopportune times and places.

7. Grief counselor Bob Deits writes: “*The way out of grief is through it*” and “*This is the most important thing we need to learn about the grief process.*” There are no “quick fixes,” no shortcuts. Because grief work is so demanding, we will constantly be attempting to deny it and seek quick ways around it. We must keep ourselves motivated to stay in the process.

8. We need other people. Very few of us, if any, can do effective grief work alone. We do ourselves a favor when we let others in on our grief. And we need to be able to tell others that what we need most from them is not advice but a *compassionate listening ear*.

9. We need to remember that forgiveness is usually a very important part of the grieving process. This may include—with the grace of God—forgiving God, church, family members, doctors, friends, neighbors, coworkers,

ourselves, and even the deceased for dying. We may need to deal with and forgive unresolved past hurts and issues with the deceased loved one. (If forgiveness is an issue, consider getting a copy of my book *How to Forgive Yourself and Others*.)

10. Religious faith may help or hurt our grieving process. Some people's religious faith tells them that weakness in the face of loss shows a lack of faith. Such a religious belief will be a big obstacle to grieving because it will consciously or unconsciously push us to deny and repress our pain. We may be constantly trying to show how strong and faith-filled we are. On the other hand, a religious faith that truly believes that God brings good things out of bad events may be very helpful. For many people of faith, a part of the grieving process is renegotiating their relationship with God. Like Jacob, we may have to do some wrestling with God (Gen 32:23-32).

11. As we interact with other grieving people, we may judge that our loss is much more severe than other people's loss. We may find it hard to sympathize with folks whose loss is not nearly as bad as ours. If we find ourselves thinking this way, we need to remember that most people tend to believe that *their* loss is the worst there is. The important thing is that we honor our own and others' experience of grief and loss. We can say to ourselves: "I am experiencing grief and I need to honor it so that I can heal."

12. It often gets worse before it gets better. Many grieving persons are distressed that, three months into their grief, they are feeling more, rather than less, pain. The reason for this is that in the first months (especially in the case of a sudden death), we are in shock. Our body is numb and we cannot *feel our loss*. This is the body's way of protecting us from feelings that we cannot cope with during the first months of our loss. As time moves on, we begin to thaw out and *experience* all the tough feelings connected with loss. Also, during the first months, we may deliberately keep ourselves very busy with paperwork and other activities and rarely take time to be present to our pain.

Since most of us enter the grief process with little or no sense of what it entails, it will be helpful to occasionally reread the above characteristics of grief. In working with people—individually or in a group—I find myself constantly reminding them of one or more of the above characteristics of the grief process.

Reflection questions: Which of the above aspects of the grief process speak to you most? Are there any others that you can think of?

Five helps in the grieving process

Before offering any concrete suggestions that might be helpful during a grieving process, I need to *strongly emphasize* that no one can offer us any easy or orderly steps that will move us quickly through our grief. Grief, by its very nature, is messy, very difficult, and normally takes lots of *time, patience, effort, tears, prayer*, and the *support of other people*. Often we may feel that we go two steps forward and three back. Having offered the above caveat, I can say that over the past few decades, as more and more counselors and clergy work with individuals and groups in the grieving process, most, if not all of them, will agree that the following suggestions are helpful.

1. *Share your grief.*

It nearly always helps to share our pain with others, especially with someone who will listen with a compassionate ear. It is important to share our story many times. We will learn early in the grieving process that there are people with whom we can share our loss and others with whom we cannot. We will find that people, including good friends, do not want to continue to hear about our loss. Others may use the occasion to burden us with *their* problems. Thus we may need to decide who are the people who are willing to listen to us talk over and over about our pain. It may be a good friend, an acquaintance, someone who has had a similar loss, a counselor, a clergy, or a grief support group. From personal experience in my parish, I can say without hesitation that a well facilitated support group can be of enormous help during a grieving process.

2. *Keep a journal.*

In her book *Widow, Rebuilding Your Life*, Genevieve Ginsburg, M.S., writes: "*Unless writing is an unbearable chore, every recent widow (and widower, we might add) should try to start a journal of her thoughts and experiences. Your early journal entries may be no more than the outpourings of your wandering subconscious and your tears on paper—even, perhaps, pages of aimless and pointless discourse. You'll feel better though, for having expressed yourself in quite a different way than you do with your friends.*" In and through the use of a journal, we give a *name* and *expression* to our grief. If we give journaling a chance, we may be pleasantly surprised how helpful it is. Many people, including myself, have found journaling to be an excellent form of self-therapy. In journaling, we can also write letters to our loved one, to others, and to God.

3. *Be attentive to what hinders and helps your grief process.*

If we want to reach a particular goal, it will be good for us to know the obstacles and helpful measures along the

way. In the grief process, one obstacle might be our tendency to ignore our grief with busy work and to show everyone how well we are doing by keeping a "stiff upper lip." Helpful measures might include any of the suggestions mentioned herein or other steps we discover to be beneficial.

4. *Read about the grief process.*

Reading about the grief process will help us to better understand what we are going through. We may discover some helpful suggestions. The stories of how others survived their grief process may inspire us and give us hope. It is good to be aware that early on in the grief process, many people are unable to focus on reading much. So we should read when we are ready and perhaps start with an article or a short book.

5. *Pray.*

Many people find it difficult to pray during a grief process. Some cannot focus or pray in the way that they were used to praying. Others find God distant. Still others may be angry with God—"I'm a good person, I love God. I'm faithful to him and now he has let me down. What is going on?"

Don't panic! Every relationship, including our relationship with God, has its ups and downs. Sometimes we feel a strong connection to a loved one. Other times we feel distant. As with any friendship, we have to learn to hang in there with God in the good times and the bad. There is no easy way to do this. During our tough times, we need to be very honest with God about our thoughts and feelings especially if until now our relationship with God has been peaceful and 'nice.' For example, it is not easy to express anger in a relationship that always has been peaceful. However, if our relationship is going to remain real, we must learn to tell God exactly how we feel. He can handle it, he has big shoulders. Write him a letter. Speak to him from your heart.

Many grieving people find that some of the Psalms are very helpful. Taking time to imagine Jesus actually weeping with Mary and Martha may help to bring God close to us. Picture Jesus struggling in Gethsemane, crying out to God with "tears and loud cries" (Heb 5:7-10). See him comforting the women of Jerusalem on his way to the hill of Calvary. In other words, look for images of God and Jesus that comfort us and give us hope.

Reflection questions

1. Have you used any of the above suggestions? If so, have you found them helpful?
2. What else have you found helpful during the grieving process?

Five signs that healing and recovery are occurring

1. We can talk about our loved one and share memories in a more comfortable manner. While our sense of loss is frequently with us, it is not as intense as it used to be. We are not crying as much. Whatever sadness, anger or guilt we experience is not as intense. Our feelings do not fluctuate as rapidly.
2. We are beginning to create a new life without our spouse. For example, we are forming new friendships, doing some new things we did not do or could not do while our spouse was alive.
3. We are coming to a realization that although life is not the same, it can be good again. We can let ourselves laugh and enjoy life. There are longer periods of time when we do not think about or focus on our loss.
4. We are building a life outside our grief. Our grief is not so engrossing.
5. We are beginning to see some good things emerging from our loss. We are discovering and developing inner resources that we did not know we had or had neglected, e.g., managing our finances, spirituality, ability to reach out and help others, travel, etc. Our social life has expanded in new directions. We have made some wonderful, new friendships.

I conclude with these encouraging and consoling words from *To Heal Again* by Rusty Barkus.

*This winter of yours will pass
as all seasons do.
There is no right way to grieve.
There is just your way.
It will take as long as it takes.*

Articles on other difficult feelings like anger, guilt, and fear can be found on www.ascensioncatholic.net (on homepage, click on Fr. Tobin's Writings and scroll down to Miscellaneous Articles).

Have a blessed week,

Fr. Tobin

tobin2@live.com

Our Catholic Appeal Update

Our assessment is \$387,308. As of Week 6, we have recorded pledges totaling \$371,252 from 676 families. This represents 96% of our goal. I thank all of you who pledged and hope you received my 'Thank You' letter.

For those of you who take time to read the Bulletin, you can see during these weeks of parish shutdown, I have a lot of extra space to offer you topics to reflect on.

Lazarus come forth

This reflection is written by Fr. Denis McBride, C.Ss.R.

Regret and Healing

When someone we love dies we become acutely aware of a large absence in our life, an absence that seems to fill the world. The death of those we love brings into sharp focus their unique quality, and we often regret that we didn't make more room for them in our life. Any of us who has watched the last moments of a life knows that it can become a time of regret and reproach—when our sorrow can take the form of wishing: “If only I had...”

But we know too that the time of dying can be a time of healing. This is shown simply and movingly by Simone de Beauvoir in her small book, *A Very Easy Death*, in which she reflects on her relationship with her dying mother:

I had grown fond of this dying woman. As we talked in the half-darkness I allayed an old unhappiness; I was renewing the dialogue that had been broken off during my adolescence and that our differences and our likenesses had never allowed us to take up again. And the early tenderness that I had thought dead for ever came to life again, since it had become possible for it to slip into simple words and actions.

Their rediscovery of each other had waited a long time, right up to the door of death; but the lateness of the hour did not lessen the power of their reconciliation. This last time together had become for both mother and daughter a time of healing, of new life. A tender relationship that was dead was brought to life.

Calling the dead to new life

In today's Gospel we hear how the death of Lazarus leaves a large absence in the lives of those who loved him. By the time Jesus arrives Lazarus is already dead, and Martha voices her regret: if Jesus had been with them earlier, things would surely have turned out differently. But Jesus' absence is essential to the story. John tells us at the beginning of his account that *through* the death of Lazarus the Son of God will be glorified. Just as the blindness of the man in last week's Gospel served as the occasion to show *Jesus as the light*, so the death of Lazarus will serve to show *Jesus as the life*.

The evangelist John is now showing us a great truth about Jesus that he proclaimed at the beginning of his Gospel:

All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.

(1:4-5)

When Jesus tells Martha that her brother will rise again, he will show her what he means now: “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” The darkness of the tomb is not too dark for Jesus; the death of Lazarus does not mean that it is too late for Jesus to be his life. In a loud voice Jesus calls to the dead: “Lazarus, here! Come out!”

The great miracle is that while he is dead Lazarus hears the word of Jesus and obeys it. Hearing the voice of the Son of God, Lazarus lives again. The great prophetic word of Jesus is seen to happen:

I tell you most solemnly,
The hour will come—in fact it is here already—
When the dead will hear the voice of the
Son of God,
And all who hear it will live. (5:25)

When Lazarus comes forth he is still wearing the clothes of a dead man. He is still enshrouded. Jesus now addresses the community: “Unbind him; let him go free.” In obeying the word of Jesus the community plays its part in helping Lazarus unwind and emerge into the light of his new life.

Our own task

The story of the raising of Lazarus proclaims the great truth that Jesus is Lord of life. He has power to call us out of our tombs—for the Christian life only begins when we, even though we are dead, hear the word of God and obey it. We know from experience that we don't have to be dead physically to be in need of being raised up. We can be dead in the midst of life—hoping for a word and a community that will put us together again.

The voice of Jesus calls us all away from making the tomb our natural habitat. It also challenges us to take responsibility for our brother who, like Lazarus, is loved by Jesus. If we see someone buried alive we are invited to do as Jesus and the community do in the Gospel: call them, and help them go free. If we do that was part of our Lenten task that resurrection at Easter won't come as too much of a surprise.

(Used with permission granted by Denis McBride, C.Ss.R, *Seasons of the Word*.)

I found this article on the internet. It was written March 11, 2020, over 3 weeks ago, so the stats in the article are much higher now. The article is by Mark Oden, a pastor of a Christian church in Naples, Italy.

I awoke this morning in Naples, Italy's third city to have been placed on lockdown. Public gatherings, including church services, have been forbidden. Weddings, funerals, and baptisms have been canceled. Schools and cinemas, museums and gyms, have all been closed. My wife and I just returned from a grocery shopping trip that took two hours due to long checkout lines. Italy currently has the highest reported number of coronavirus cases outside of China: 9,172 cases and 463 deaths. As a result, 60 million people have been told to remain in their homes unless absolutely necessary.

How are we, as Christians, to respond to such a crisis? Answer: with faith not fear. We are to look into the eye of the storm and ask, "Lord, what are you wanting me to learn through this? How are you seeking to change me?"

Here are eight things we'd all do well to learn, or relearn, from this coronavirus scare.

1. Our Fragility

This global crisis is teaching us how weak we are as human beings.

At the time of writing, 98,429 cases of coronavirus have been reported worldwide, causing 3,387 deaths. We're trying our best to contain its spread. And, for the most part, I guess we're confident of eventual success.

Now imagine a virus even more aggressive and contagious than coronavirus. Faced with such a threat, could we prevent our own extinction as a species? The answer is clearly no. It's easy to forget, but humans are weak and frail.

The words of the psalmist ring true: "The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind [or COVID-19] blows over it and it is gone and its place remembers it no more" ([Ps. 103:15-16](#)).

How does this lesson of our fragility hit home? Perhaps by reminding us to not take our lives on this earth for granted. "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" ([Ps. 90:12](#)).

2. Our Equality

This virus doesn't respect ethnic boundaries or national borders. It's not a Chinese virus; it's our virus. It's in Afghanistan, Belgium, Cambodia, Denmark, France, America—77 countries and counting have been contaminated by the coronavirus.

We're all members of the great human family, created in the image of God ([Gen. 1:17](#)). The color of our skin, the language we speak, our accents, and our cultures count for nothing in the eyes of a contagious disease.

In the eyes of the world, we're all different; in the eyes of the virus, we're just the same.

In our suffering, in the pain of losing a loved one, we are completely equal—weak and without answers.

3. Our Loss of Control

We all love to be in control. We fancy ourselves captains of our destiny, masters of our fate. The reality is that today, more than ever before, we *can* control significant parts of our lives. We can control our home's heating and security remotely; we can move money around the world with a click of an app; we can even control our bodies through training and medicine.

But perhaps this sense of control is an illusion, a bubble that the coronavirus has popped, revealing the reality that we're not really in control.

Now, here in Italy, the authorities are trying to contain the spread of this virus by closing, opening, and closing again our children's schools. Do they have the situation under

control?

What about us? Armed with our disinfectant sprays, we try to lower the risks of being infected. There is nothing wrong with this activity. But are we in control of the situation? Hardly.

4. The Pain We Share in Being Excluded

A few days ago a member of our church traveled to northern Italy. On her return to Naples, she was excluded from a dinner with work colleagues. She was told it would be better for her not to come due to her recent travels up north, even though she hadn't been anywhere near the red zones and wasn't displaying any coronavirus symptoms. Obviously, this distancing hurt her.

A 55-year-old restaurant owner from central Naples has recently been quarantined. Having tested positive for COVID-19, he was said to have felt relatively well physically, but was saddened by the reactions of many of his neighbors: "The thing that has hurt him more than his positive diagnosis for the coronavirus, is the way he and his family have been treated by the city in which he lives" (*Il Mattino* newspaper, March 2, 2020).

Being excluded and isolated isn't an easy thing, since we were created for relationship. But many people, now, are having to deal with isolation. It's an

We're all members of the great human family, created in the image of God ([Gen. 1:17](#)). The color of our skin, the language we speak, our accents, and our cultures count for nothing in the eyes of a contagious disease.

experience the leper community of Jesus's day knew all too well. Forced to live on their own, walking the streets of their hometowns shouting, "Unclean! Unclean!" (cf. [Lev. 13:45](#)).

5. The Difference between Fear and Faith

What's your reaction to this crisis? It's so easy to be gripped by fear. It's easy to see the coronavirus everywhere I look: on the keyboard of my computer, in the air I breathe, in every physical contact and around every corner, waiting to infect me. Are we panicking?

Perhaps this crisis is challenging us to react in a different way—with faith and not fear. Faith not in the stars, or in some unknown deity. Rather, faith in Jesus Christ, the good shepherd who is also the resurrection and the life.

Surely only Jesus is in control of this situation; surely only he can guide us through this storm. He calls us to trust and believe, to have faith and not fear.

6. Our Need of God and Our Need to Pray

In the midst of a global crisis, how can we as individuals possibly make a difference? Often we feel so small and insignificant.

But there is something we can do. We can call out to our Father in heaven.

Pray for the authorities running our countries and cities. Pray for the medical teams treating the sick. Pray for the men, women, and children who have been infected, for the people afraid to leave their homes, for those living in red zones, for those at high risk with other illnesses, and for the elderly. Pray the Lord would protect us and keep us. Pray to him, that he might show us his mercy.

Pray also for the Lord Jesus to return, that he might come back to take us to the new creation that he has prepared for us, a place with no tears, no death, no mourning, crying or pain ([Rev. 21:4](#)).

7. The Vanity of So Much of Our Lives

"Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities. All is vanity" ([Eccles. 1:2](#)). It's so easy to lose perspective in the midst of the madness of our lives. Our days are so filled with people and projects, works and wish lists, homes and holidays, that we can struggle to distinguish the important from the urgent. We lose ourselves in the midst our lives.

Perhaps this crisis is showing us what to concern our lives with. Perhaps it's teaching us what's really important in our lives and what is vanity.

Perhaps this crisis is reminding us what we should concern our lives with. Perhaps it's helping us to distinguish between what's meaningful and meaningless. Perhaps the Premier League, or that new kitchen, or that Instagram post aren't essential to my survival. Perhaps the coronavirus is teaching us what really matters.

8. Our Hope

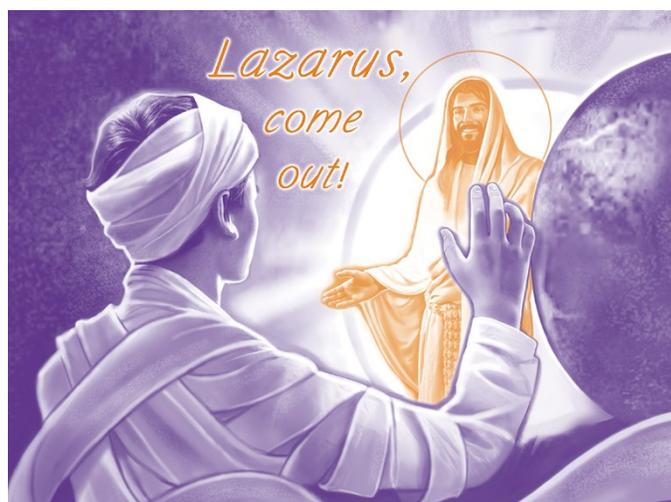
In a sense, the most important question is not, "What hope do you have in the face of the coronavirus?" because Jesus came to warn us of the presence of a far more lethal and widespread virus—one that has struck every man, woman, and child. A virus that ends in not only certain death, but eternal death. Our species, according to Jesus, lives in the grip of a pandemic outbreak called sin. What is your hope in the face of that virus?

The story of the Bible is the story of a God who entered a world infected with this virus. He lived among sick people, not wearing a chemical protective suit but breathing the same air as we do, eating the same food as we do. He died in isolation, excluded from his people, seemingly far from his Father on a cross—all that he might provide this sick world with an antidote to the virus, that he might heal us and give us eternal life. Hear his words:

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

([John 11:25–26](#))

(Reprinted from "8 Things the Coronavirus Should Teach Us," Mark Oden, March 11, 2020. Copyright © 2020 The Gospel Coalition, INC. All Rights Reserved. Used with Permission.)



A Reflection Poem on the Coronavirus by Sr. Maud Murphy, SSL - Knock, Ireland

We were flying to the Moon
 We were finding life on Mars
 We were dropping bombs with drones
 We were getting bigger cars.

We were building finer homes
 Flying out to warmer lands
 We were busy buying clothes
 We were brushing up our tans.

We were throwing out good food
 While we watched the starving poor
 We kept burning fossil fuels
 And our air became less pure.

We were warned by our Pope
 Need to mind our Common Home
 Need to watch our Carbon Footprint
 Try to save our world from doom.

But we didn't want to listen
 And we didn't want to hear
 We just watched TV and Tablets
 Drank our wine and quaffed our beer.

Then Corona chose to visit
 We were all caught unprepared
 This wee microscopic VIRUS
 Has our whole world running scared.

So our hands we keep on washing
 And we're careful when we cough
 We stand six feet from our neighbor
 Cause this virus might jump off.

Now we live in isolation
 While our hearts are full of fear
 And we fill our fridge and cupboards
 Just in case it lasts a year.

Pubs and cafes are forbidden
 And we dare not go to Mass
 Nursing homes we must not visit
 Hospitals we have to pass.

But this enforced isolation
 Gives us lots of time to think
 Time to clean the kitchen cupboards
 Time to make our wardrobes shrink.

Could it be that this Corona
 Is a blessing in disguise
 Makes us think about our lifestyle
 Makes us open wide our eyes.

We thought we were all important
 Greatest beings on this earth
 So we used it and abused it
 As if it were ours from birth.

But Corona is a challenge
 Makes us take a different view
 Helps us see what really matters
 What it is we need to do.

We must watch out for our neighbor
 Doing everything we can
 We are all in this together
 Let us love our fellow man.

God is with us every moment
 Minding us with loving care
 Now we know how much we need Him,
 Let us talk to Him in prayer.

So Corona, thanks for coming
 Truth to tell, we needed you
 But don't overstay your welcome
 That, alas, would never do!





Next Sunday's Readings
April 5, 2020 A

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66

Remember a time in your life when
Christ's Death and Resurrection had a
special meaning to you.

YOUTH MINISTRY



Ascension Catholic Life Teen

Life Teen and Edge are suspending in person events until further notice but anyone can follow or like us on Instagram and/or Facebook at ascensioncatholicteens to join in on all of our virtual events happening.

Questions about Youth Ministry?
Contact Cara Giuliano, Director of Youth Ministry,
or Anna Nagy, Associate Youth Minister, EDGE
program at
ascensioncatholicteens@gmail.com
or 254-1595 x 3501.

**Join us for
Vacation Bible
School!
June 22nd-June 26th**

**Register online from
March 5th to May 8th**

**Check our web-page for info!
www.ascensioncatholic.net >
Faith Formation > V.B.S.**

**Questions? Contact Betsy at 254-1595 x 3080 or
by e-mail at dre@ascensioncatholic.org.**



Wedding Anniversaries

Mark & Diane Nichols	35 years	Mar 31
John & Rosemarie Harbach	50 years	Apr 4
Robert & Doreen Snyder	30 years	Apr 3



Greg Grasso, Betty Elko, Claire Grasso, Mia Moore, Carmelia Navarretta, Peggy McKelvey, Cathi Hurd, Ted Stoner, Betsy Coradine, CVNS, Joan Barco, Rose Struzinski, Mary Laird, John Kelly, Jim Eisenmann, Laurie Chatman, Marge Pearsall, Ann McKelvey, Terri Sills, K.J. Baker, Richard Furstenburg, Amanda Oudwa, Janice Roberson, Robert Hinnant, Mary Ellen Ritter, Maureen Kurtz, Theo Reaves, Leo Shumaker, Shirley Mattai, John DeStefon, Thomas Horan, Margie Boozer, Jim Warwick, Bill Porzio, Wayne Fogel, Anthony Tynes, John Hemel, John Thorstad, Joan Cantwell, Tim Durkin, Kathy Jagdmann, Art Coridine, Steve Weinhold, Leslie Selage, Jonah Powers, Phyllis Powers, Werner Schulz, Justine Miller, Cosanne Mistretta, Elizabeth Mengel, Patrick Kenny, Pam Conner, AJ Johnson, Marion Sampieri, Ron St. Clair, Matther Rabel, Fr. Mike DiRenzo, Anita Byers, Ava Barone, Jennifer, Elisa Fernandez, Eric Farrell, Frank Cavaliere, Jim Thorstad, George Lopes, Mikey Goodwin, Donna Tiptom, Traci Wood, Recca Downey, Jeannette Nissen, Kristen Reid, Frances Moberly, Joey Tauper

Please pray for those in the nursing homes.

Pray for our Armed Forces Personnel overseas

Joseph Marci, Robert Crowl, Bryan Calenda, David Barlow, Dylan Traver, Marty Martinez, Jonathan Martinez, Bryan Satterwhite, John Kinsora, Josh Grier, Robert Grover, Rory O'Connor, Shane O'Connor, Alex Ritner, Kyle Mimbs, Kristin Agresta, Andrew Nemethy, Lance Freeberg, Theresa Mavity, Matthew Hammond, Daniel Amulong, Dr. Jerry Higman, Margaret-Anne Sytxma, Matt Maurer USAF, Daniel Sosa, Ray Romano, Matthew Cavalcante, Chad Bloomstine, Matthew Carney, Logan Solio, Nick Owens

Mass Intentions For The Week



Week beginning Monday, March 30
and ending Sunday, April 5, 2020

Mon. 7:30 am	† Eva Moore
	† Donald Becker
Tues 7:30am	† Lee Dague
	† Robert & Dorothea Terneus
Wed 7:30am	† Doris Grady
	† Bill Walker
Thur. 7:30 am	† Frank Prosch
	† Lou Gaudreau
Fri. 7:30 am	† Joyce Hohl
	† Aida Arreland
Sat. 9:00 am	† Ronald Faeth
	† Paul Wielage
4:30 pm	† Chuck Mitchell
	† William J. Rochette
Sun. 7:30 am	People of the Parish
9:30 am	† JoAnn Dube
	† Norma Waseleski
11:30 am	† Rose Lester
	† Ronald Stieber
5:30 pm	† Victor Hannan
	† Julieta & Pablo Blanco

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TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

Today, we know more about the beginnings of Lent than our ancestors did. We know that Lent is, first of all, about Baptism and, secondly, that it is about the desire of all the baptized to renew the power and potential of that Sacrament at Easter. For centuries, this deep truth was largely obscured, but today documents have come to light to reshape the Church's thinking and practice.

One source, discovered in the 1880s, is the pilgrim diary of a Spanish nun, Egeria, writing her sisters a detailed travelogue of a fourth-century sojourn in Jerusalem during Holy Week. She describes in vivid detail her participation in liturgies that are close cousins of our own Holy Week prayer, from a festive procession with palms to a procession to the Cross. Her greatest delight is in the huge number of elect: men, women, and children who experience a time of deep retreat and identification with Christ's Cross, guided by the bishop and supported by their godparents' constant nurture. The discovery of Egeria's diary proved to be a moment of grace for the Church; after a long period of "ecclesial amnesia," we know at last that Baptism is really the work of a whole community of faith, convened by God.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.