

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

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He is Risen!
Alleluia, Alleluia

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION

J O Y !

In the season of Lent this year I gave a series of four, one-hour talks over four Thursday evenings and we had a good crowd attending each time. I was surprised that I could speak for a whole hour but felt, at least from my vantage point as speaker, like it went by so quickly. The theme I chose was an image of a room in your house that is full of junk and is disorganized. How would you go about cleaning it? Of course, the theme is what we need to do – with God's help – within ourselves not only in Lent but when our lives become cluttered and disorganized and have little room for God. The four talks pertained to the four things I would do to clean up a messy room. First, empty the room, (emptying self of self), then secondly, sort out what is garbage, what is no longer needed and can be given away (eliminated) and then the actual cleaning of the room (confession) and finally the restoration of the cleaned room with a new sense of purpose, which is the beautiful and powerful work of God in us when we reflect, repent, are reconciled and restored.

In the last talk I played a 1965 recording called *Joy Is Like the Rain*, one of the many songs and records my grade one teacher, Sister Mary Jacqueline would put on while we were doing art or some activity where the mind could still take in the words to the songs being sung. The records sung of the Ten Commandments, Jesus and Zaccheus, about what happens at Mass, etc. One particular song was *Joy Is Like the Rain*. A group of Missionary Medical Sisters recorded many records with songs composed by one of the sisters, Miriam Therese Winters. She was going through a difficult time in her life and dealing with much stress and anxiety when she wrote the song. The song goes like this:

I saw rain drops on my window,
joy is like the rain.
Laughter runs across my pane,
slips away and comes again.
Joy is like the rain.

I saw clouds upon a mountain,
joy is like a cloud.
Sometimes silver, sometimes gray,
always sun not far away.
Joy is like a cloud.

I saw Christ in wind and thunder,
joy is tried by storm.
Christ asleep within my boat,
whipped by wind, yet still afloat.
Joy is tried by storm.

I saw rain drops on a river,
Joy is like the rain.
Bit by bit the river grows,
till all at once it overflows.
Joy is like the rain.

Joy is the sense of Easter triumph in Jesus' Resurrection and its promise for ours. It comes, as the song says, in the midst of gray, storms, slipping away but returns and overflows. It is the

language of heaven experienced and expressed here on earth in those things that deeply gladden and fill the heart. Personally, I love the rain as it cleans away the dirt and death of winter, reminding me of what God wants to do in me. (FrC)

WHERE WAS GOD?

It was a tragedy of tremendous proportions six years ago, on Friday April 6 in Saskatchewan when a bus carrying 29 members of a hockey team and just twenty minutes from the location they were to play in a playoff game, was in an accident with a tractor trailer. Fifteen members of the team were killed and fourteen others were injured. The Humboldt Broncos hockey team was headed north to Nipawan where they were to play the Nipawan Hawks when the tractor trailer failed to stop at a stop sign and at high-speed t-boned the bus ripping it in two. The truck driver survived.

At a memorial in a community arena for the hockey players killed in the horrific accident, among the several speakers who shared words of sympathy and encouragement to those gathered in such terrible grief, was the team chaplain, Rev. Sean Brandow, who posed the question everyone asks in situations like this: Why did this happen and where was God?

After himself seeing the site and devastation of the bus crash site, Rev. Brandow told the crowd "I needed to hear from God" as he himself sensed he needed God to help him make some sense of what didn't make sense at all. He related that at least four different scripture passages had been sent to him but as truthful as they were none of them hit the spot on what he was feeling. And then someone mentioned that to the one dark line in the famous 23rd Psalm better known as the Lord Is My Shepherd, "*though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death*", which speaks directly and strikingly against the backdrop of the rest of that tranquil, peace-filled psalm about the darkness that afflicts all our lives in some measure, it wasn't the end of the sentence or truth to that darkness, for it continues.... "I will fear no evil, for YOU are with me. Your staff and rod, these comfort me."

I felt the chaplain did a very good job in an almost hopeless situation of posing the questions that were on everyone's mind.

I have often talked about this very thing at various funerals I have presided over in my priesthood citing the Rabbi and author Rabbi Harold S. Kushner who wrote the book *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People*. After the horror of 911 in New York and the events of that day, many talk shows invited him on asking the question as to why this happened. I remember hearing him say, (and I'm paraphrasing here from memory), "So often Jews, Christians and people of faith believe that if we are good, life should be fair to us and yet we know that life is not fair. It is ridiculous to somehow believe that an easy, untainted, unharmed living will be the result of our goodness because it doesn't make sense. Part of our frustration is from the fact that we know as self-evident that life isn't fair, that the good suffer along with the bad, etc." Rabbi Kushner wrote his doctoral thesis on the 23rd Psalm of David pointing out that one line Rev. Brandow and so many countless other ministers of God's Word have preached on in that psalm concerning the 'valley of the shadow of death'. He concluded that it is the line which follows that is our source of hope and light, that we would not fear even though we must walk through that valley, because the Good Shepherd, (Jesus), walks with us. We are not alone in our grief and sadness. Jesus truly walks along with us even if we are not conscious of it. Christ will so

APRIL 20, 2025

often give us an extraordinary peace in the midst of terror, fear and grief, but He always walks with us and is one with us.

While I, as a priest, have not had to deal with such a tragedy as the loss of several lives at the same time, I have had these questions asked of me, not that anyone on the face of the earth, save Jesus, can adequately answer them. Yet, as impossible as these questions everyone asks in the face of human grief are, there are truths which can be known in the faith and life of those who believe and follow Jesus.

I remember many years ago when a 41-year-old man who was a husband and father had died quite tragically in a boating accident and I had presided over the funeral. He had been standing in the back of the boat with others when the boat made a quick turn and he was thrown into the water. The panicked passengers frantically circled the boat around to pick him up out of the water but by the time they did so he had already succumbed to the water and was dead. The family were in shock, deep grief and heartbroken to say the least. Following the funeral Mass, we drove to the cemetery where I presided over the interment. As I finished the prayers and gave a blessing to the mourners, I stepped away from the grave to allow the family time before their last goodbyes. I remember it was a beautiful sunny, summer day with a gentle breeze that moved the trees and you could hear the happy sound of birds in the midst of this great time of sadness. The silence of the mourners was broken by a lone voice that, admittedly, startled me when someone from the crowd asked aloud but directed toward me, "Why, Father?" If I had to rehearse an answer to that question, I know I could not have answered better than the one the Holy Spirit gave me in that moment. I stepped back toward the place where I had been standing at the grave and responded, "The question is not really why but who? Who is the One who created all things? Who is the One who made us and has blessed us in so many countless ways? Who is the One who promised to raise the dead back to life in a new heaven? Who is the One we believe in? The question of why will never be answered here on the earth and no Rabbi, Priest or Minister of God should ever hasten to recklessly do so. The question is Who? Jesus is that One who promised us that even though we die we shall live with Him forever." And the same voice from the crowd of mourners replied, "Thank you, Father."

To the oft asked question of where is Jesus or where was Jesus comes the truth that He is here. "I am with you always until the end of the earth". (Matt. 28:20)

I am confident that when we meet the Lord in the fullness of time and see Him as He is, among the many realities and revelations we will know, will be the knowledge of just how close Jesus was to us through the many joys and sorrows of this life and we had no idea. Catholics, I think, in seeing the beautiful, loving, joyful face of Jesus will be reminded, as were the disciples on the road to Emmaus, that we saw Him so many, many times in the Eucharist but didn't really see Him because we never paid attention to His teaching, His words, His truth, His REAL PRESENCE among us. See Him! (Fr. Charles)

BLESSED EASTER!

MASS INTENTIONS

Tues April 22
7:00pm Special Intentions Guerrero & Felipe Family
Wed April 23
8:30am Health Intentions John's Mother
Requested by Barb Gal
Thurs April 24
8:30am +Melanie McGroarty
Requested by Maura McGroarty
Fri April 25
7:30am Holy Hour
8:30am All Soul's in Purgatory
Saturday April 26
8:30am Unannounced Mass
3:30pm Confession
4:30pm +Katherine Cudney
Requested by the Family
Sunday April 27
9:00am For the People
11:00am +Rocco Cornacchia
Requested by Clare & Gene Bisogno

Please Pray for the Sick

Fred Coulson, Hilary Joseph, Albert Sant, Teresa Kosierb, Elizabeth Pavilsa, Alex Poirier & Family, Tammy MacDonald, Anita Taglione, Mary Little, Yvonne Grimm, Janine Wright, Anne Johnston, Dorothy Shaughnessy, Rose Flanagan, Norma Still, Pat Ironside-Mayes, Yvonne Besley, Bev Underhill.

Please Pray for the Recently Deceased

Peter Mantrop & Roberta Byrne



**The Sanctuary Lamp Burns
For the Parishioners of St. Mary's**
April 13th to April 19th



Regular Collection April 13th \$5317.00 (Inc PAG)

EASTER FLOWERS

If anyone is interested in donating to the Easter Flowers, there are envelopes at either entrance to the church. Thank You

Easter Sunday - The Resurrection of the Lord April 20, 2025

Thank you for being a beacon of hope

On Easter Sunday, we thank you for being a beacon of hope for our brothers and sisters in need by supporting ShareLife. In their darkest hours, you are right beside them. As we rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord this Easter Sunday, let us open our hearts to all.

Please give at the parish using a ShareLife envelope, online through our parish website, or at sharelife.org/donate.

Goal \$46,500.00 - Raised to date \$12,116.00

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