



## **THE CANTERBURY TALES**

**MARCH 2016**



### **FR. MARK'S MUSINGS**

I was doing some preparation for our ecumenical Good Friday service and I was asked to review a 1986 movie called *The Mission*. In it there is a powerful scene of a man who is carrying a rather large very heavy bundle. In the scene he has to climb steep cliffs, cross a river, and hike over a mountain always dragging or carrying this bundle. It is obvious that it is a burden and consumes his energy. While at the same time the others in this party do not have this kind of burden and manage the same terrain rather easily. When he finally reaches the mountain top, exhausted and spent, one of the others comes to him and cuts the rope that binds his bundle to him and throws it off the cliff into the river below. The man breaks down and sobs a deep and cleansing cry. At the same time the others around him are now cheering and laughing. They are happy for him and welcome him back to a wholesome relationship with them. There are tears of joy and loving embraces to celebrate that the man has given up his burden and rejoined the community.

The bundle of course represents a burden of his own making. It holds his guilt, anger, frustration, and judgment of others. Its weight is holding him back and preventing him from keeping up with the others. He is almost unaware of the others around him and in front of him. His sole focus is on his burden and yet, it brings him comfort. At least that is what he believes. Even though it is a burden that holds him up and restricts him, it is familiar and comfortable and he cannot let it go. There is comfort in the familiar, even if it is a burden.

We all have our burdens. St. Paul would call them our sins. They are the baggage we all carry inside and unless we learn to let them go, or someone who truly cares for us cuts the rope and throws them in the river for us, they become a crushing debilitating burden that stands between us and that which God has created us to be. In second Corinthians he calls these sins; “quarrelling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder”. It is only by the forgiveness of Jesus Christ that we learn to let these familiar weights go and live free. He says in Galatians, “By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”.

When we are carrying our burdens we are oblivious of the community around us and how easy it is for them to see that we are suffering. And so we go on carrying our burdens, our sins. It is much easier to live in the spirit when we learn to forgive, and to accept forgiveness. Forgiveness means to give up all hope of a better past and let go of anger for some past event. To accept forgiveness means to let go of the guilt we feel for some sin we have done by omission or commission. In either case it is we who are relieved of our burdens.

As we near the end of Lent and look forward to Easter I ask us all to remember Jesus words from Matthew “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

The man in the movie was so weighed down by his burdens that he could not even look up to see his salvation, and it was standing all around him. It was his Easter moment. I pray that each of us finds a way to see our savior and walk free in joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, through the forgiveness of Christ. And in doing so we can give up those burdens that blind us to the love surrounding us, and free us to join or rejoin the Body of Christ that eagerly awaits us. It is in fact, the most blessed gift we could possibly receive and it’s already done.

Peace always and Happy Easter,

*Fr. Mark*





## DEACON'S NEWS AND NOTES

"The air is like a butterfly  
With frail blue wings.  
The happy earth looks at the sky  
And sings."  
- Joyce Kilmer, *Spring*"

I continue with my regular "Fridays at Nicholson House," the diocesan office, (804 East Juneau) and again invite you to stop in for coffee/tea and a tour.

On the second Sunday of March, I will be concluding this year's My Promise, My Faith with the children at St. Thomas of Canterbury. The young ladies will present their final reflections on their chosen line from the Girl Scout Law and will receive a second My Promise, My Faith pin.

The next Executive Council meeting is April 9th. As executive secretary, I will be meeting with Bishop Miller on March 21<sup>st</sup> to prepare the agenda.

Again, as the new director of the Deacon Formation School, I will be away from St. Thomas of Canterbury one weekend a month. This month I will be at the De Koven center Saturday/Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

We, on the Lifelong Christian Formation Committee, met with the Bishop in February and will be creating a funding program to assist parishes with Christian Formation. Those of us on adult formation are planning a "Book Talk" day:

June 4<sup>th</sup>

Good Shepherd, Sun Prairie

The Rev'd Charles Henery author of Yankee Bishops, Apostles in the New Republic 1783-1873 (Studies in Episcopal and Anglican Theology.)

10:00-12:00 (talk and questions)

1:00 light lunch

You are the first to hear!

Convention planning meetings and convention data entry (the certified delegates from each parish) have begun!!! This year's convention – October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> – is at the Madison Marriott West Hotel & Convention Center, Middleton, WI. More information to follow as plans are finalized. Congratulations to all elected as delegates and alternates; it is an amazing experience, especially the Eucharist.

"March is a month of considerable frustration - it is so near spring and yet across a great deal of the country the weather is still so violent and changeable that outdoor activity in our yards seems light years away." - Thalassa Cruso "

Peace and prayers,

*Deacon Marge*





## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

We all know that STOC wouldn't run as smoothly as it does, and many things would be left undone if it weren't for our dedicated volunteers. This month, we'd like to spotlight the Counters, who spend time every Sunday counting everything that comes in through the Offering before it can be deposited. Many thanks to Kris Reed, Scott Celsor, Joan Lamson, Mark Lamson, Joy Becker, Barb Miller, Kat Worzalla, Tammy Wyman, Veronica Heaney, Lee Monk, Angie Bier, and Randy Schraw!



We are still in need of the following volunteers ...

**Coffee Hour Hosts:** This is a one year commitment. Signup sheet is posted in the Narthex.

**Singing Rooster Coffee Representative:** We've been asked to become a distributor of Singing Rooster Coffee which was served at our Annual Meeting.

**Easter Bunny Assistant:** Christian Education needs one person (or a group) to assist with the Easter Egg hunt on Easter morning.

***Please contact Donna Celsor for more information on each item listed above.***

## MARCH CELEBRATIONS

### BIRTHDAYS



Alyssa Brunelli	March 1
Joann David	March 4
Cheryl Carstens	March 5
Roy Wyman	March 6
Tammy Knapton	March 11
Matt Luetzgen	March 11
Brian McKnight	March 12
Jesse Hein	March 16
Lindsey Lent	March 17
Ashley Wilke	March 18
Daniel Lent	March 22
Kat Worzalla	March 22
Lisa Chmielewski	March 23
Michelle Seppala	March 28
Matthew Done	March 29
Elizabeth Lent	March 30
Joan Lamson	March 31

### ANNIVERSARIES



Jerry & Ruth Lent	March 20
Tom & Barb Labisch	March 31

## BOOK CORNER



Last month I wrote about the book, *40 Days of Decrease: A Different Kind of Hunger, A Different Kind of Fast*. The book references another book which I requested from the library, *The Hiding Place*, by Corrie Ten Boom. I would like to recommend Ms. Ten Boom's book which was first published in the 1970's in this month's column.

Corrie Ten Boom lived in Holland during WWII and the Nazi occupation. The book centers on the lives and experiences of Corrie and her family. It answers the question, "How should a Christian act when evil was in power?" This is a quick read but is very deep in its content.

