



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2021

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PERSONS, PLACES AND THINGS: LESSONS FOR MY LENTEN JOURNEY

February 27, 2020

By Barb Arland-Fye

Editor, Catholic Messenger

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Backing out of the garage in our spotless, still new car, I noticed the door from our house to the garage remained open. "Colin, you didn't close the door as I asked you to do!" I said in exasperation to my son seated next to me. "Go close the door."

Colin apologized, got out of the car, entered the open garage and headed toward the panel with the garage door buttons. My frustration escalated. I wanted him to close the other door, which he inexplicably overlooked. His confusion over my instructions about which door to close led him to close the garage door — on the front end of the new car!

I felt an electric shock of panic as I imagined the damage to the new vehicle. The garage door went back up. I quickly put the car in reverse and got out to inspect the damage, but not before making an angry remark to Colin. No damage appeared anywhere on the car. Now a bit calmer, I apologized to Colin and tried to figure out why our communication failed. A little voice in my mind (perhaps God?) said, "Remember, Colin's autism sometimes challenges his interpretation of what we ask him to do."

Lesson learned, I thought, as we headed to our parish for Saturday night Mass. Colin, apparently shaken by the garage door incident, whispered loudly to me during Mass, promising not to damage my car again. Colin wasn't the only one whispering to me. God's whisper left me humbled as we sang the responsorial psalm: "The Lord is kind and merciful."

My copy of the "2020 Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word" shows a notation next to that responsorial psalm: "For meditation and context." I plan to reflect on verses from the psalm this Lenten season:

"Merciful and gracious is the Lord, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. Not according to our sins does he deal with us, nor does he requite us according to our crimes."

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."

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FEASTS FOR MARCH

The feasts on the General Roman Calendar celebrated during the month of March are:

- 7 Third Sunday of Lent, Sunday
- 8 John of God, Opt. Mem.
- 9 Frances of Rome, Opt. Mem.
- 14 Fourth Sunday of Lent, Sunday
- 17 Patrick, Opt. Mem.
- 18 Cyril of Jerusalem, Opt. Mem.
- 19 Joseph, husband of Mary, Solemnity
- 21 Fifth Sunday of Lent, Sunday
- 23 Turibio de Mogrovejo, Opt. Mem.

- 25 Annunciation of the Lord, Solemnity
- 28 Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, Sunday

As we continue our journey "up to Jerusalem" during the month of March, three prominent ideas are proposed for our contemplation by the liturgy of Lent: the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, baptism, and penance. ☐

THANK YOU

... a small and simple phrase that comes from a grateful heart!

Psalm 106:2

From **Joy D. Pasco**

"To my prayer warriors,

The past year has been a challenge both physically and emotionally for me. My health was my biggest hurdle and it not only affected me physically but emotionally as well.

I am so thankful and grateful for your continued prayers for me. This past year, I have developed a renewed strength and faith in God. I have put all my trust in Him.

With his grace and mercy, He has healed me physically and repaired me spiritually. He has opened my eyes and heart to Him again.

Again, thank you for your prayers. They will never be forgotten.

May our dear Lord send more Blessings to all of you!

Sincerely grateful,

Joy"

GOD TOUCHED ME

*Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. — 1 Chronicles 16:24*

THE UNFATHOMABLE LOVE OF GOD

By Mila Lumba, a devotee

*Those who know my name will trust in you for you, Lord,
have never forsaken those who seek you.*

Psalm 9:10

God's mercy and love has always been with me at all times. What I went through could have been very difficult if I did not have God's love.

I have been sick since 2002 when I was diagnosed with End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) which led me to having dialysis three times a week for 3.5 hours per session. During this time, I was the only one working because we had two school aged children that my husband had to attend to. With my illness, I was working full time as a nurse and part time as visiting nurse. I was able to do this mainly because of God's love. My closeness to God was strengthened when in 2004, God sent a close friend to move to Las Vegas where I live.

I started joining her in praying the First Saturday Devotion, and later, the addition of Devotion to God the Father on First Sundays of the month, 2000 Hail Mary devotion and 800 Our Father devotion. We also joined the Cenacles on First Saturdays. All these devotions were through The Spiritual Army of God the Father. Through these devotions, I experienced God's loving presence always beside us, guiding us and taking care of us. I truly felt that He knows what we need and what is best for us even before we ask for it.

Due to this illness, I was in and out of the hospital for different medical reasons. During one of our devotional prayers in early July 2006, I was given a message from the Holy Infant Jesus through God's Son Helper that on the second full moon I would receive a new kidney.

For the past four years, I have been praying for a kidney transplant. I was listed at USC Hospital in Los Angeles and had to travel twice a month for my checkup. My nephew who lived in the Philippines offered to donate his kidney. We had him tested in Manila and we matched, so we sponsored him to come to the USA. However, when he got here, he developed fatty liver issues and so the doctors at USC Hospital ruled him out as a donor. I was devastated and for a moment, forgot God's presence in my life. I pulled myself up by holding on to His promise that

He will never abandon us, and I know that God works in mysterious ways. Because of this donor rejection, my transplant listing was transferred to UMC Hospital in Las Vegas. Since this was new in Nevada and my USC listing was in 2002, I was placed on the top of the list. My nephew's rejection by USC made it possible for me to be transferred to Las Vegas list. Had I remained in the USC listing, it would have taken several more years before I could be called because I was way down in the bottom of the list.

After two months of waiting, I was called for transplant. This was August 19, 2006, a few days after the second full moon since the July message. My transplant was a success but with a new kidney came more medical care because of all the anti-rejection pills. I was taking 22 pills daily; each one had its benefits and side effects. Since I was on steroids, I started gaining so much weight, developed diabetes, hypertension and thyroid problems. But with all these problems, I was able to live a normal life. I developed a leg ulcer, a calcium deposit that started the size of a grain of rice and became as big as my palm. This gave me infection and I was hospitalized and given IV therapy. This was very alarming because my transplanted kidney could be affected. Aside from this problem, I developed breathing difficulty and so I was hooked up to an oxygen tank at all times. Thus, I was forced to take an early retirement.

For two years, I had oxygen therapy at all times. Then, my doctors said I had fluid retention on my legs, but nothing was done until my legs were swollen. I was hospitalized for this and there they found out that I also had fluid in my heart and lungs. They did a procedure where they drew out 1,000 cc of fluid from my heart and another 1,000 cc from my lungs. Then, I was on rehab for four months. During this time, I felt even closer to God. Instead of feeling depressed, I thanked Jesus for making me share His sufferings. I had all kinds of tubes hooked up to my body: catheter, oxygen, IVs in my arms. I was taken back to the hospital and this time, they had to open

up my chest to remove the fluid from my heart. I could have easily fallen to depression but my love for God prevented it. I just kept repeating, "Thy will be done, Lord." For almost a year, I was in and out of the hospital and rehab facility. My daily mass and devotional prayers helped me feel I could go through all the tribulations. I always held on to God's Promise in Psalm 91:14-16.

As I became well and was back to my usual self, my transplanted kidney started to give up. After 13 years with my transplanted kidney, I had to go back to dialysis. It was easier for me to accept my plight at this time, no longer sad, sorry nor afraid because I have given myself up to God's will. I always utter the words, "Thy will be done, Lord" to all my medical and personal problems.

When my oldest daughter passed on at age 42 almost two years ago, it was painful losing a child, but my faith made it easier for me to accept God's will and to give her back to God. The Spiritual Army of God the Father ministry helped me grow up spiritually. We need to be in a community which will nurture our spirituality. We need to have people who are there for us all the time and to help us pray and remind us of God's love.

Just recently, around end of November and early December, I tested positive for COVID 19, another trial but I clung to God. I had chills, loose bowel movement, shortness of breath and had to use oxygen again. With prayers, I tested negative after two weeks and another negative result after a week. My husband, who also fell ill, got well, too. God really answers prayers.

Recently, my wound doctor ordered a CT of my leg to find out why the wound was not healing. With God's grace, the wound is now healed. God really works in His mysterious ways because when the CT of my leg was done, they found a different medical issue which was not on my leg.

It was a cancerous tumor in my left native kidney. My kidney doctors said that because of my age and my poor medical condition, the only option is to freeze the tumor; in medical term, cryosurgery, a one-day procedure. Again, my faith was tested. At my cryosurgery, the anesthesiologist had difficulty finding my vein, so I was stuck 13 times. During this ordeal, I uttered my thanks to Jesus for allowing me to share His sufferings. After the surgery, I had bleeding complications at the surgical site and had to be hospitalized for four days. Another CT was done and saw that the bleeding did not stop. So, they did a renal angiogram. My hemoglobin count started to drop. They had to test me every six hours to monitor my hemoglobin level. But when the bleeding stopped, my blood count went back to normal without any blood transfusion nor medication. God has His plans for me, and I submit to His Holy will. I still continue to pray unceasingly to strengthen my faith, hope and trust in the Lord.

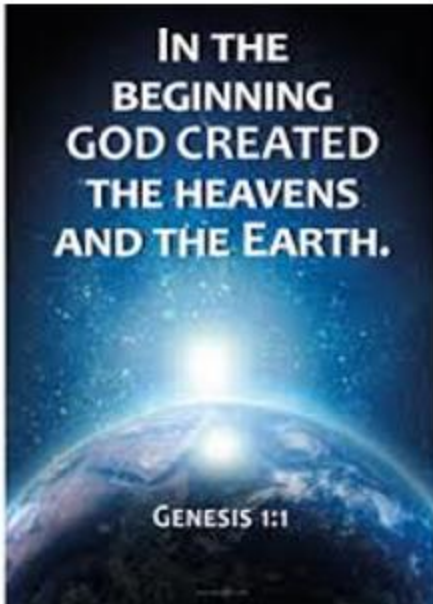
With all these experiences and all the hardships of being sick, I still feel the comfort and reassurance of God, His unconditional love for me. My relationship with Him is growing deeper each day. I call on Him and feel the mighty presence of the One who understands me perfectly and loves me dearly. Through the direction and guidance of the Lord, I continue to belong to this community, with people who are always there to remind me of God's love. I am writing this in Thanksgiving for God's love for me and for everyone. "Let the peace of Christ rule your hearts since as members of one body, you were called in peace. Be thankful." Colossians 3:15. ☐

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

LOVE IS ALWAYS PLENTIFUL IN OUR MIDST

BY VICTOR ARANETA

When the Lord God created our world it was done with love and appreciation of beauty. We can just imagine. how after each creation, He appreciates the created animate objects and how good they were to His eyes.



Humanity, as part of that creation, was viewed by God as good and perfect. Later on, after the fall of man, this appreciation of His creation still remains in God as beautiful and lovely but humans started to see a lot of imperfections on himself and around him. Humanity changes and makes modifications. Working under the guise of improvements, man works towards the destruction and annihilation of God's creation. We appreciate this creation not from the

original form that was created but from the modifications man has made to suit his own narrative of preservation.

With what is happening around us, let us pray to God for wisdom so we can see the original beauty of His creation not from our own perspective but from the original potter's hands and heart of giving and of loving our Almighty God. ☐

Upcoming Events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

1ST FRIDAY DEVOTION

MARCH 5, 2021

IN LOS ANGELES:

VIA ZOOM

IN LAS VEGAS:

VIRTUAL

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION

MARCH 6, 2021

IN LOS ANGELES:

VIA ZOOM – HOLY MASS IS AT 10:30 AM

IN LAS VEGAS: VIRTUAL

1ST SUNDAY DEVOTION

MARCH 7, 2021

IN LOS ANGELES:

VIA ZOOM – HOLY MASS IS AT 10:30 AM

IN LAS VEGAS:

SAINT SHARBEL CHURCH

10325 RANCHO DESTINO RD.

LAS VEGAS, NV 89183

MASS AT 9:30 AM FOLLOWED BY

DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT THE CHAPEL

800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH,

HUSBAND OF MARY

MARCH 20, 2021

IN LOS ANGELES:

VIA ZOOM

IN LAS VEGAS:

VIRTUAL

PERSONS, PLACES AND THINGS:

LESSONS FOR MY LENTEN JOURNEY

After Mass, during a wine and cheese party at our parish, I chatted with Deacon Matt Levy about the transgressions of a public figure I admired greatly and wondered how I could reconcile that person's deviancy with the tremendous good he accomplished for people with intellectual disabilities.

Deacon Levy advised me to pray about it, to ask for mercy for the soul of the public figure who died last year. The deacon said the failings of a revered public figure serve as a reminder that all of us are broken people, much in need of God's mercy.

Scrolling through my Twitter notices Sunday, I came across one from Bonnie Rodgers, who tweeted "#psalm 103 #Sunday 'the Lord is kind and merciful' I'm counting on that." I "liked" her tweet.

Deacon Frank Agnoli has provided The Catholic Messenger with an expansive guide to understanding Lent. He reminds us that "Lent is less about ourselves in isolation (and our personal sins) but about being a baptismal people, a people on a journey."

I will keep that teaching in mind, hopeful that it won't take a garage door coming down on our car to remind me to be kind and merciful, as our Lord is. ☐

*“. . . I am your Mother Mary. God Almighty will not forsake you, my children. My presence will always be with you. (private message deleted)
There will be a sign in the end that good will triumph over evil. Pray, pray, pray and keep still.*

Mary, Your Lady of the Rosary
02052021
2:30 AM and repeated at 10:40 AM

GOD'S HOLY FIRE

www.heartlight.org



KEY THOUGHT

Love is shown by the actions that back up a person's words. We show our love for Jesus by what we do, by obeying what he has taught us. Jesus, however, doesn't expect this demonstrated love for him to be a one-way street. He shows us his love for us by having the Father send another Friend like himself to us. This Friend, the Holy Spirit, is called the Advocate or Comforter or Helper in other translations. The Father sends this Friend so that we will never be alone. We can be confident that we will always have the presence of God in our lives!

PRAYER

Father, words can't express my thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit. I know that even when I am by myself, I am not alone. I know that when earthly friends forsake me, or those close to me betray me, your Presence is my Helper and my Friend. Thank you. Please forgive me for not seeking this Friend's help and support in times of trouble. Please make the presence of this Friend very clear as I live my daily life. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen. ☐