

Gratitude, a full heart, a sense of peace and profound joy, seeing the world in high definition, full of color, detail, wonder, and beauty.

This is how I feel having recently returned from my Celtic Pilgrimage to Ireland and Scotland with a special group of people from the parish in which I grew up. It was in that church where the seeds of my faith were planted and nurtured so long ago, allowing them to develop the deep roots that today anchor my life. It's humbling but wonderful to visit sites thousands of years old where people of faith journeyed, worshiped, and gathered, seeing God's hand in all creation. I felt so small, realizing what a speck my life is when considering the vastness of human history, but also appreciating the gift of life each of us is given.

The lesson to live each day well with a full and grateful heart was reaffirmed once again.

Genesis 40:1-23; Psalm 54; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23; Mark 2:13-22

Birthday: Spencer Nardone, Sue Patrick, Bob King, Wesley Phillips, Daniel Ucelo

Friday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
9:00 a.m. A Way Out
9:30 a.m. Life Group
10:00 a.m. Bible Study
8:00 p.m. Friday Night Young Peoples' AA

Today's Ministry: Lay Readers

Saturday, February 24

Mark 2:23—3:6 *He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.* (v.5)

Anger, disappointment, frustration—very human emotions that our Lord Jesus also experienced. He was deeply distressed with the Pharisees who were so consumed with their rules of law that they missed the rule of love. They missed the point completely, failing to see that this man whose hand was shriveled, useless, and deformed had been healed. What a miracle. This should have been time to rejoice.

As humans, we experience many emotions, but we see only a portion of the big picture. We know "in part" but God knows fully. He is the author of everything, all of creation. Please ponder this again from Genesis 1:31: On the sixth day "God saw all that he had made, and it was a very good." Truly God loves us totally and completely, all the time, and wants the very best for each of us. Where can you find a better offer than following Jesus Christ who already knows and loves you just as you are? You are enough, you are worthy, and you are deeply loved. Thank You, God.

Genesis 41:1-13; Psalm 55; 1 Corinthians 4:1-7

Birthday: Jennifer Korber

Saturday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"

9:00 a.m. Lenten Quiet Day
9:30 a.m. AA Step Study for Women
12:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Clean at Noon"
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
6:00 p.m. Mary's Kitchen Volunteer Dinner
6:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Kleen N Krazy"
8:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Not Alone"

Today's Ministry: Life Groups

by Suzanne McKee

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"Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with love"

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St. Mary's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with Love

Good News Daily

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Sunday, February 18

John 12:44-50 *"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."* (v.46 NIV)

Darkness has many meanings—physical darkness as the earth rotates and daylight turns into night. But perhaps even darker than nighttime is a broken, empty soul, destitute and alone. God doesn't want this for us, His beloved. He sent Jesus, the light of the world, into our midst to give us hope and a future. Wholeness and health is available to us if we surrender ourselves to the One who loves us completely and wants the very best for us.

Look to Psalm 139:11-12 for comfort and reassurance: "If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you." Thanks be to God.

Daniel 9:3-10; Psalms 63, 98; Hebrews 2:10-18

Birthdays: Judith Root, Carol Marsh

Sunday's Calendar

Discretionary Fund Sunday
7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 a.m. Contemporary Family Worship Service
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
9:10 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Coffee Hour Farewell to Melissa
10:15 a.m. Pre-baptism Class
10:30 a.m. Stephen Ministry Meeting
11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
12:15 p.m. Adult Confirmation Class
4:00 p.m. Financial Peace Class
6:00 p.m. Youth Confirmation Class
6:00 p.m. Youth Group

Today's Ministry: Facilities Committee

Monday, February 19

Genesis 37:1-11 *Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age, and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father*

loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. (vv.3-4)

Do you have favorites—a team or college, a type of car, a certain brand? I'm sure we all can admit to this. But what about our children? No wonder Joseph's brothers resented him as their father showered their youngest brother with special gifts, attention, and affection. Sibling rivalry is alive and well.

I grew up in a large family, five girls and one boy, born over a 17-year span. Although we are all very different, unconditional love continues to bind us together. My father always called me his favorite—but he specified that I was his “favorite #2 daughter”! He did this for each one of us as well as for all his grandchildren. We were all his favorites, he showed no partiality.

That's how God loves us. We are all His favorites. There is nothing we can do to make Him love us more or less than He already does. His love is our gift, pure grace, undeserved and unearned. Isn't this profound? I am so grateful.

Psalms 41, 52; 1 Corinthians 1:1-19; Mark 1:1-13

Birthdays: George Shahood, Barbara Porcelli, Caroline Clark

Anniversaries: Maurice and Janet Giannotti, Bill and Virginia Harrison

Monday's Calendar - President's Day

Office Closed
7:00 a.m. AA “Hour of Power”
4:30 p.m. ACA Step Study
5:00 p.m. Daughters of the King
5:30 p.m. Stephen Leaders Meeting
5:45 p.m. ACA Families
6:30 p.m. Life Group—off campus

Today's Ministry: Finance Committee

Tuesday, February 20

Mark 1:14-28 *The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as teachers of the law.* (v.22)

I have a cynical streak. At times, I've wondered if I would have been in the crowd shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” as Jesus faced Pontius Pilate. I hate to admit that publicly, but those thoughts have been part of my faith journey and they have saddened me at times. Over the years as my walk has deepened, enriched by gifted teachers, priests, and study, I feel more hopeful that I would have been one of Jesus' followers, drawn in and deeply transformed by the profound truths he shared.

Recently, I was privileged to go on a Celtic Pilgrimage to Ireland. One of our stops was Glendalough, a beautiful valley in the Wicklow Mountains and the site of ruins of an ancient monastic city dating back to the 5th and 6th century. We spent two days there and, on the second morning, were blessed to walk and learn from Fr. Michael Rodgers, a Catholic priest, whose love for this place and our Lord was palpable. His quiet presence and words were mesmerizing, poignant, and almost Christ-like. The experience touched me deeply and continues to do so, creating

a hunger to learn more. Both Fr. Michael and St. Kevin, who lived, loved, and experienced God's presence here centuries ago, only magnify for me how those early Christians must have felt as they listened to Jesus. He taught with authority, with wisdom, with such insight and truth. They were awed and amazed. I think I've had a taste of how special and life-changing hearing Jesus firsthand must have been...enough to melt this cynic's heart and warm her soul to the truth that Jesus is the way to abundant life.

Genesis 37:12-24; Psalm 45; 1 Corinthians 1:20-31

Birthdays: Betty Phillips, Elli Hernandez

Tuesday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA “Hour of Power”
9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study
12:10 p.m. Holy Eucharist & Healing
1:00 p.m. Stewardship Committee
3:00 p.m. Finance Meeting
5:00 p.m. Facilities Committee Meeting
6:00 p.m. Overeaters' Anonymous
7:30 p.m. NarcAnon “Just for Today”

Today's Ministry: Flower Guild

Wednesday, February 21

Mark 1:29-45 *A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man, “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!”* (vv.40-41)

When the leper approaches Jesus desperately wanting to be healed, he says, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus is always willing but are we willing to ask for help, for healing, for wholeness?

So many times, we fail to ask—sometimes feeling unworthy, other times simply not asking. Our Lord wants the best for all of us, always. He is for us, not against us. He loves us totally and completely. We are part of His creation made in His image. It can be humbling to ask for help, but also the beginning of a new and deeper relationship with God.

For many years I've attended a weekly healing service at my church, truly a gift to myself. I've learned firsthand that God wants us to be whole in body, mind, and spirit. He tells us, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Our part of the relationship is to ask for help, to go to Him. God so loved the world and we are part of that world for which He sent His only Son, Jesus.

Thank You, Lord, for such sacrificial love.

Genesis 37:25-36; Psalm 119:49-72; 1 Corinthians 2:1-13

Birthdays: Dee Dee Nice

Anniversary: Art & Jacqueline Lorr

Wednesday's Calendar

6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study
7:00 a.m. AA “Hour of Power”

9:30 a.m. Staff Eucharist
10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
1:00 p.m. Journaling 101
4:45 p.m. Mary's Kitchen
5:30 p.m. AA “Daily Reflections”
6:00 p.m. Lenten Series
6:00 p.m. Life Group
7:00 p.m. Life Group
8:30 p.m. NarcAnon “Klean and Krazy”

Today's Ministry: Heritage Society

Thursday, February 22

Mark 2:1-12 *When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”* (v.5)

Forgiveness is essential to healing. It's the key. It does not mean you condone the wrongs that were done or that you are saying the wrongful behavior was okay. Forgiveness does, however, allow you to put those wrongs in their place, give them to God, and move on. It gives you freedom to live in the present moment, to experience joy and peace again, to anticipate the future.

It saddens me when I see people who refuse to forgive, who become bitter and joyless. Please, if you are struggling with unforgiveness, seek help. Ask God to help break your heart of stone so that healing can begin. It is a gift to yourself, to those who love you, but, more importantly, you are following Jesus' own words in the Lord's Prayer to “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

Thank You, Lord, for helping me experience personally the power of forgiveness, the freedom and the healing it brings.

Genesis 39:1-23; Psalm 50; 1 Corinthians 2:14—3:15

Birthdays: Jean Donaphon, Eddie Beverly

Thursday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA “Hour of Power”
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
11:15 a.m. Osceola Lunch Bunch
12:30 p.m. OA
5:00 p.m. Warden's Meeting
5:30 p.m. ACA Men's Group
5:30 p.m. Qigong Class
6:30 p.m. Life Group
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. AIAnon “Stepping Stones”

Today's Ministry: Hospital Visitors

Friday, February 23

Psalm 40 *Many, O LORD, my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.* (v.5)