

Pondering a Tragedy

No one can fail to be moved by the devastation that has taken place in the country of Haiti recently. Already the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, this earthquake was one of the largest in the last 200 years, according to reports. The loss of life, the scale of injury, the misery of those surviving in terrible conditions, breaks the heart.

To some, it also brings thoughts like: “*How can God do such a thing ?*” Although I can’t claim to speak for God, I can not believe that God would intentionally cause misery or destruction or tragedy. As I see it, God’s intention is always to create, not destroy. All of the Scriptures show God trying to relate to His people, and save them from tragedy. Jesus, God’s true spokesman, always worked to proclaim God’s love for all, and to heal every sickness and disease. In every encounter that Jesus had with sick persons, He always cured them of their illnesses. This was one major way that He showed God’s favor. In the terrible tragedy in Haiti, and in all the countless tragedies in the past, I am sure that God does not intend or cause the destruction. He, I’m sure, mourns with the rest of us.

“*Then why does He allow these things to happen ?*” Again, it’s a question only God can answer. But so much evil takes place in our world through human choice: someone chooses to kill, or harm, or defraud, or betray, or disrespect another. Free will is a dangerous gift that God gave to us—to make us truly free. What we are called to do, is to *freely* choose the good—every time. When anyone uses their free will the wrong way, many evil consequences follow that even God can’t stop. The Lord was really serious when He gave us this gift. We live in a world where all of us sometimes use it the wrong way—it’s called sin. And inevitable consequences follow.

In some similar way, our world itself is imperfect. The forces of nature are beyond our control, and are sometimes out of control. Jesus Himself predicted earthquakes, devastating floods and other natural phenomena that would plague us until the end of time. If this world were perfect already, we might not look forward to the next one. For His own reasons, the Lord does not reign in the forces of nature, perhaps in the same way He does not stop humans with evil intent.

“*So what do we do ?*” All we can do is look to Jesus’ example of dealing with evil, and keep our faith in the power of prayer. We know from the Gospels that, at every turn, Jesus confronted the evil; He did not retaliate, but worked to change it. He absorbed the evil in Himself in His suffering and death on the cross. He kept faith that His life of trust in the Father was the best way. And that trust brought Him to the Resurrection—His final defeat of evil and death. Jesus has called us to follow Him on this same path of faith in the ultimate goodness of the Father. And He has called us to follow His example of alleviating suffering while here on earth. Our prayers for our suffering brothers and sisters in Haiti make us one with them. Our donations help in some small way to bring practical aid and comfort to their shattered lives.

May God bless all,
Father Wayne

A Prayer for the People of Haiti

God of all creation, as we weep with our family in Haiti, console us. In this time of crisis, open our eyes to look beyond the disaster, to see Christ in our brothers and sisters. Be with all creation. Strengthen us as we stand in solidarity with those living and working in Haiti. Be with us in our mourning, and guide our efforts to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, comfort the grieving and stand for justice. With your mercy, sustain us at this time as we continue to work for peace and justice for all people, in all places. Amen.
--from Catholic Relief Services

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 24, 2010

St. James the Greater

The Sanctuary Lamp this week burns in
Memory of Charlie Lombaerde at the
Request of his wife, Carol

TUESDAY, January 26

8:00AM – Charlie Lombaerde
req. by his wife, Carol

SATURDAY, January 30

8:00AM – Matt Kelly
req. by Michelle Henn

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 31

8:00AM – Dorothy Sandberg
req. by Jane & Doug Sandberg

11:30AM – Gail Hathaway
req. by Robert Lamb, Jr.

ST. JAMES THE GREATER

\$1,213.00 – Regular Collection – January 17, 2010

\$ 351.00 – Diocesan Assessment

\$2,477.00 – Weekly Budget Need

\$1,039.00 – Regular Collection – January 18, 2009

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

\$2,442.00 – Regular Collection – January 17, 2010

\$ 803.00 – Diocesan Assessment

\$4,410.00 – Weekly Budget Need

\$2,733.00 – Regular Collection – January 18, 2009

TO CHRIST THE DIVINE HEALER WE PRAY FOR:

Bree Andrews, Vickie Bennett, Joseph Bruno, Eric Cerra,
Jerry Cooper, Jason DeLorenzo, Geri Fawyer, Ronnie
Ferriere, Nancy Green, Eric Harper, Horace Harper, Sharon
Hubbell, Peter Jaycay, Sharon Johnson, Chuck Lombaerde,
Florence Majewski, Karen Morgan, Richard Nowicki, Joseph
Peraino, Flo Puccio, Evelyn Schweer, Deena Slain, Bill
Sousa, Catherine Vecharello, Lisa Vergona, Tarra Wagner
and Gabriel Wyzga

St. Thomas the Apostle

The Sanctuary Lamp this week burns in
Memory of Yo Cunico at the
Request of Frances Demalderis & Family

MONDAY, January 25

9:00AM – Bernie Reich
req. by his wife, Grace

TUESDAY, January 26

9:00AM – Janice Lorene Wiseman
req. by Clara & Joseph Kane

WEDNESDAY, January 27

9:00AM – Yorio Cunico
req. by his wife, Mary
- Bill Monk
req. by his wife, Ginny

THURSDAY, January 28

No Mass

FRIDAY, January 29

9:00AM – John Carroll
req. by Sr. John Marie
- Rev. Thaddeus Michota
req. by Josephine Yarosz

SATURDAY, VIGIL, January 30

5:30PM – David O'Brien
req. by Mary Flexer

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 31

9:30AM – David Serena
req. by Mary & Bill Erickson
- Intentions of Prayer Shawl Ministry
Many Thanks
req. by Deacon Cliff Jorgensen

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Ordinary Time and Other Feasts

We call any days that are not advent, Christmas, Lent, or Easter, *Ordinary Time*. The Sundays in Ordinary Time are all numbered. For example, today we celebrate the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. During Ordinary Time, we try to pay attention to the lessons God gives us for everyday life.

Green is the color of Ordinary Time. The chasuble worn by Father Wayne at Mass is green. So is the stole worn by Deacon Wayne. The altar cloth and banners that hang in the Sanctuary are also green. In our Church, the color green stands for hope, growth and life. As we learn the lessons God teaches us in each Mass, we grow in our hope to live with God and one another one day in heaven.

There are also many feast days during Ordinary Time. Some of the main ones are Trinity Sunday, the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Feast of the Transfiguration and the Feast of Christ the King. During Ordinary Time we also celebrate some special days in honor of the many men, women and children that our Church has declared as saints. Happy and Blessed Ordinary Time!

Did you know...

January 27th is Chocolate Cake Day! While Jesus never ate chocolate (it's a New World plant), he would have eaten carob, which is similar to chocolate. Make a chocolate (or carob) cake for dessert today and remember to give thanks to God for such a wonderful treat!

Helping Haiti

Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the official international humanitarian agency of the U.S. Catholic Church, is responding to victims of the massive earthquake in Haiti. To donate, please call 1-877-HELP-CRS, donate online at www.crs.org or send a check to Catholic Relief Services, PO Box 17090, Baltimore, MD 21203-7090. In the memo portion of your check, please write: Haiti Earthquake. For more information, go to crs.org and crsespanol.org.

PILGRIM VIRGIN OF FATIMA STATUE

This beautifully adorned statue is a visible reminder of the love God has shown in the Blessed Mother. Placing such a beautiful image in your home turns hearts to prayer and brings grace to those who open their hearts to any image of God's love. If you would like to have the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in your home, please contact Diana, Legion of Mary at 973-948-7601. *Pray the Family Rosary*

Blood Drive

The Knights of Columbus will be hosting a Blood Drive in the Father Lewis Center on **Sunday, January 31st** from 8:00am to 2:00pm. Blood supplies have been below required levels and donations are greatly appreciated. Please sign up to donate and help save lives!

Don't know what to do with those Christmas Cards?

Donate your Christmas Card fronts to St. Jude's Ranch for Children in Boulder City, Nevada. The ranch deals with at-risk children. Their motto is..."with help comes hope." The children trim the fronts and attach them to new backs. The children would get \$.15 for each card made as spending money. St. Jude's would resell the new cards. If you would like to donate your used greeting cards to Chris Higgins (201-738-9968) I will see that they are sent to the ranch. St. Jude's Ranch for Children is not associated with St. Jude's Children Research Hospital in Tennessee. I will have boxes at both churches for you to place your cards. Thank you in advance.

St. James Venison Dinner

Our dinner will be held on **Saturday, February 13th** at the Port Jervis Naval Ship.

Beyond the Parish

Camp Auxilium Learning Center (Preschool Program for 3, 4, 5 and Full day Kindergarten) 14 Old Swartswood Road in Newton will be having "Open House/Registration Days" on January 26th and 27th from 9 – 11am for the September 2010 school year. For further information, please call 973-383-2621 between 9am and 2pm for check our website.

Attention Men of our Parish: The 4th annual Our Lady of Mount Carmel Men's Retreat is planned for January 29 through 31 at Sacred Heart Spirituality Center. Those who attended our three previous retreats found them to be a very special time that brought them closer to God. All men are welcome; you do not need to be a member of our parish, so please bring along a friend or relative and join us for a weekend of spirituality, prayer and fellowship. For more information or to register, please contact Deacon Tony at barile@ptd.net or 973-383-3430.

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISHES

STC -- St. Thomas Ch. or Fr. Lewis Center

SJC -- St. James Ch. or Church Hall

REC -- Fr. Gacquin Religious Ed. Center

Sunday, January 24, 2010

9:30 a.m. STC C.L.O.W.

2:00 p.m. STC 8th Grade Spelling Bee

Monday, January 25

Tuesday, January 26

10:00 a.m. STC Reflection on Readings

4:00 p.m. REC Gr. 1 & 2

7:00 p.m. STC K of C Officers' Mtg

Wednesday, January 27

4:00 p.m. REC Gr. 3, 4 & 5

Thursday, January 28

9:30 a.m. STC Moms & Tots Group

Friday, January 29

All day: STC Adoration of Blessed Sacrament

3:00 p.m. STC Chaplet of Divine Mercy

4:00 p.m. STC Evening Prayer & Benediction

Saturday, January 30

9:30 a.m. REC Legion of Mary Mtg.

Sunday, January 31, 2010

At All Masses: Blessing of Saint Blaise

8 a.m.--3 p.m. STC K of C Blood Drive

9:30 a.m. STC & REC Gr. 6-7-8 Mass & Class

4:00 p.m. REC Confirmation Prep.

Future Events

Sat. Feb. 13 6:00 p.m. St. James Venison Dinner
at Port Jervis Naval Ship

St. James' Resurrection Fund. We continue to work on this fund-raising drive to help complete the several projects needed at St. James at this time. Our goal is to raise \$ 40,000. We are asking each parish family to contribute \$ 300 by Easter. With these funds we can secure the roof of the church, and re-seal the parking lot. Already we have repaired and paid for the broken pipes underneath the church and the rectory. With your help, our parish will remain secure.

Why Catholic? Sign-Up Sunday today.

Our new series is entitled: "*The Celebration of Christian Mystery*" and will be a study of our Seven Sacraments. You will come to understand better the power and strength that each Sacrament has to offer. We speak of the Sacraments as Jesus' way of continuing His work on earth. Join us for six hours, during the six weeks of Lent, and come to see how they are the center of the Church's life. **Sign-up** is after each Mass. Let this be your "extra effort" during Lent. You will be greatly rewarded.

The devastation in Haiti defies description. Know that Catholic Relief Services, under the direction of the U.S. Bishops' Conference, is working night and day to alleviate the suffering. Your donations are most gratefully welcomed. We have been assured that "every cent collected" will go directly towards the relief efforts that are underway. Your prayers are also needed for those who have suffered so much, and for those who are trying to help them.

We Need to Talk. Dialogue is a very important part of our Liturgy. The words between priest and people at Mass show that the Mass is a celebration involving all present. In the (near ?) future, some of the dialogue, as well as the "Gloria" and "Profession of Faith" will change slightly. This is to conform more closely with the Latin original. For example, we now say, several times: "The Lord be with you." "And also with you." When the changes come out, it will be: "**The Lord be with you.**" "**And with your spirit.**" (*Et cum spiritu tuo.*) As space permits, you will hear more about these changes. For more information, contact: www.usccb.org/roman_missal

Time is Love. Each year as we pass another birthday or significant milestone, we can be thankful for all the time we've been given. Yet making it to this moment doesn't guarantee us one minute more. We could fret about how our days are numbered, but our faith shows us another way to calculate matters. Christians see time measured in love—and love is everlasting. We don't need to know the hour or the day of our death, because the love we give and receive stems from a never-ending source: which is, was, and ever shall be. As we love, we are already tapping into eternity. --Prepare the Word