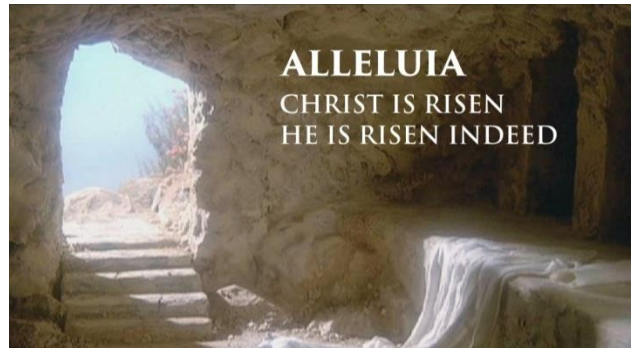


Grace Notes in Miniature

For Thursday, May 7, 2020



Dear friends:

Among the myths and legends of the Greeks is the story of Pandora. It relates how Epimetheus (whose name means “hindsight”) opened a jar left in care of his wife Pandora (which means all gifts) which released all the evils into the world, after all of the positive virtues had been allowed to escape. When she opened the jar to check, only Hope was left. The allegory of this story is that even when we think all is lost, there is always still room for hope.

Today’s theme for CEW is “Hope For the World”, and it is this realisation that the “world” is larger than the little “universe” right around each of us which makes us as a Faith community truly catholic. We generally have an understanding of the word, “catholic” meaning universal; however, Merriam-Webster offers as synonyms such words as unlimited, unqualified, unrestricted, among others. As I read this and saw “unqualified”, my first response was “huh?” But as I thought about it, the first thing that came to mind was the prayer we offer prior to communion: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” Every time we pray this, it reminds us that we do not do anything to earn God’s love and the great gift that Jesus gives to us of himself; the only ‘qualification’ is to say “yes”!

Today, we are reminded to pray for our whole world that everyone may have a reason to hope.

Jesus, during Your ministry on Earth You showed Your power and caring by healing people of all ages and stations of life from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Be present now to people who need Your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel Your power of healing through the care of doctors and nurses.

Take away the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give them a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them. (Worldvision.org)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEkXzi19Crk>

The prayers and readings for today’s Mass start with addressing God as the one who ‘[restores] human nature to yet greater dignity’ in the Collect, and then continues to remind us of the incredible relationship we have been offered by God by giving us a brief synopsis of that history. I loved the line in the reading from Acts 13:13-25, talking about God’s relationship with the people of Israel: “For about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness.” Doesn’t that sound a lot like the way we relate to our teenagers as we accompany them through the testing years of adolescence on their way to



adulthood? Then Jesus assures his disciples, after he has washed their feet, “Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.” This is a reminder to all of us that we are called to be open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit which have been breathed on us in Baptism and sealed in Confirmation. Any gift only really takes on its meaning when it has been unwrapped; the gifts of the Spirit are no different. Until we take each of them out of the box and determine how we are going to use it, it is dormant.

One of the ways in which we share the gifts we have been given is in our care for one another. Marc Clare tells me that the Halton Catholic Children’s Education Foundation has had a 710% increase in filling requests for help, compared to this time last year: 92 families and 215 students in March/April 2020, as opposed to 25 families and 30 students in 2019. With that in mind, you may be able to consider creating a team for the 24-hour fast from whatever you would like on June 3rd to 4th. You can find more info at: https://www.hccef.org/?post_type=events&p=3502 I know that several



schools have already committed teams to this and there is plenty of space for other teams or individuals to join in. And the fasting doesn’t have to be from food: it can be from television or social media or anything your imagination can envision. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVEyrHiSm6Y>

Remembering that we are all one family, we recognise that people pray in many languages. I remember a story told me by a friend from Stornoway, (Steòrnabhagh), the capital of the Western Isles of the Hebrides of Scotland. It’s not that long ago that there would have been many people living on the islands whose first – and often only – language was Scottish Gaelic. My friend’s mother, having been confronted by a door-to-door salesperson who only spoke English, announced to her son that there had been a ‘daft man at the door who couldn’t understand her. When Iain told her that the man just “didn’t have the Gaidhlig”, she exclaimed, “Oh, the poor dear; how will he ever get into heaven?” As Iain reported, she believed solidly that the language of Eden was the Gaidhlig, and couldn’t imagine God being able to converse in English. For centuries, our Church celebrated in a common language, first Greek and then Latin, and it was not until the Second Vatican Council in 1963 that celebrating the Mass in the vernacular was introduced. At that time, the Latin Tridentine (from Trent) Mass was actually banned; however, protest from clergy and some of the Faithful allowed for it to be celebrated under limited circumstances. I am sure that there were many Catholics who believed that God’s language was Latin!

I invite you to enjoy this offering of the Our Father in Aramaic, the language of Jesus. It is very haunting and moved the Holy Father very greatly as he listened to it, during his visit to Georgia in September 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=locW-9S00VU>

Psalm 71:5 – “For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth.”

Gillian