

February 14, 2016
Bulletin #7

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church

2216 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

Rectory: 304-233-1688 • Fax: 304-233-4714

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Msgr. Bakhos Chidiac, Pastor

Evelyn Ghaphery, Organist



Sunday of the Leper

- ***Weekend Masses:** Saturday evening at 4:00 p.m. [*Rosary & Litany start 20 minutes before Mass*]
Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. [*Rosary & Litany start 20 minutes before Mass*]
- ***Weekday Masses:** Tuesday to Friday at 12:05 p.m. [*Rosary & Litany start 20 minutes before Mass*]
Monday No Mass
- ***Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament:** First Saturday of the month at 3:30 p.m.
First Sunday of the month after 10:30 a.m. Mass
- ***Confession:** Saturday: 3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. or any other time by appointment
- ***Baptism:** Please call the Pastor as soon as baby is born; at least one Godparent must be Catholic
- ***Weddings:** Please make arrangements at least six months in advance before any other plans are made
- ***Sick Calls & Anointing of the Sick:** Please notify the Pastor at 304-233-1688
- ***Parish Council:** Lou Khourey, Carol Dougherty, Mike Linton, Rita Strawn, P.J. Lenz, Mary Stees
- ***Choir Members:** Earl Duffy, George Thomas, Lou Khourey, Robert Harris, Shelly Hancher, Ted Olinski
- ***Bulletin Coordinator:** Thomasina Geimer
- ***Altar Server:** Mike Linton
- ***Altar Boys:** Dalton Haas, Shaun Hancher & Luke Lenz
- ***Cedar Club:** Linda Duffy, President 304-242-6853
- ***Women's Society:** Sandra Dusick, President 304-232-7395



- ***Bulletin Announcements:** Submit all Bulletin Information to Msgr. Bakhos by Noon on Tuesday every week
- ***New Parishioners:** We welcome you with great joy & invite you to officially register as one of our parishioners
- ***Cedar Hall Rental Fees:** Call the Church Office at 304-233-1688 or 304-639-1372
- ***Parking:** Saturday & Sunday parishioners may park in both lots; Monday-Friday park ONLY in the 3 Alley spaces
- ***Remember the Church in your Last Will & Testament:** Her prayers will accompany you to heaven

Gospel Reflection: Sunday of the Leper

Readings: Rom 6:12-23 and Mk 1:35-45

Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by the bacillus lepræ, characterized by the formation of growths in the skin, mucous membranes, peripheral nerves, bones, and internal viscera, producing various deformities and mutilations of the human body, and usually terminating in death.

Lepers were subjected to most stringent regulations. They were excluded from the church by a funeral Mass and a symbolic burial. In every important community asylums were erected for the unfortunate victims. Lepers had to wear a special garb, and carry "a wooden clapper to give warning of their approach. They were forbidden to enter inns, churches, mills, or bake houses, to touch healthy persons or eat with them, to wash in the streams, or to walk in narrow footpaths".

Owing to strict legislation, leprosy gradually disappeared, so that at the close of the seventeenth century it had become rare except in some few localities.

In the United States, the majority of cases occur in Louisiana and California, while from many other States cases are occasionally reported, notably from New York, Ohio Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Missouri, the Carolinas and Texas. In Louisiana leprosy has been gaining foothold since 1758, when the Acadians introduced it.

At the beginning of the 20th century, and according to the statistics furnished by delegates to the second international conference on leprosy, there were approximately 200,000 cases of the disease throughout the world: India, it is stated, coming first with 97,340 cases; the United States contributing 146 cases, and the Panama Canal Zone the minimum of 7 cases.

The average course of leprosy is about eight years and death is the ordinary conclusion of every case, which may come from the exhaustive effects of the disease.

So far leprosy has baffled all the efforts of medical science ... it being admitted that the disease is both contagious and preventable, there seems to be no doubt that means of public protection should be provided... Of all the states of the Union, Louisiana supports the leper-home at Carville where some seventy patients are housed under the care of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

The global prevalence of the disease has fallen by 90% since 1985 with over 12 million patients cured worldwide since that date. Moreover, the gross disabilities which were such a feature of the disease for millennia, are now becoming a thing of the past, with early detection and treatment. Leprosaria and the physical separation of patients from their families are completely unnecessary.

Saint Valentine

Legend is the best we can do when it comes to telling the story of St. Valentine (died 269), since most of the facts of his life are lost in the mists of history. But somehow the basics survived: the amiable priest who defied Roman law to join young Christian couples in marriage; the steadfast visitor of prisoners who, when found out, was forced to become one of them himself the captive who managed to get a message out from his cell signed with those magic words, "Your Valentine."

Valentine had been born into a noble Roman family. He lived in a home with servants and many comforts. When he was a young man, he became a physician. Valentine liked his work, but he felt there was something missing in his life. He found what he was looking for in the new religion called Christianity. It was a religion that said you were to love your neighbor as yourself and that when you died you rose to a new life with God. Valentine loved his new faith so much that he became a priest.

Being a priest was something Valentine had to do in secret. In public he was a respected physician. As part of his work, he visited the sick in the city's jails. Prisoners in the jails were treated very badly. Christians were treated worst of all.

Valentine did what little he could to help his Christian friends, He smuggled food to them and slipped them medicine from his supply. This put him in great danger because Claudius, the Roman emperor, had spies everywhere. In time, Valentine was caught helping his friends. The soldiers arrested him and demanded that he

offer sacrifices to the pagan gods. When Valentine refused, he was thrown into jail with the prisoners he had tried to help.

In jail, Valentine became friends with the jailer's daughter. Legend tells us she was blind and that Valentine cured her of her blindness. Valentine knew that he was soon to die, so he wrote a letter to the jailer's daughter. He told her how much her friendship meant to him and thanked her for her kindness. He signed the letter, "Your Valentine."

Soldiers came and took Valentine to Palatine Hill where there was an altar to one of the pagan gods. On that hill, on the fourteenth day of February, Valentine was beheaded. He was buried in Rome, where a gate was once named in his honor. It was called *Porto Valentini*.

Almost two hundred years after Valentine's death, the Church of St. Praxedes was built over the place where he was buried. About that same time, the pope declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day. It was already a day on which there was a Roman festival to celebrate love. As part of the festival celebration, young men and women chose partners by drawing names from a box. The partners danced together and exchanged gifts as a sign of their affection. Some of the young people continued to see each other after the festival and many of them married. As Christianity spread, Church officials wanted to give Christian meaning to the pagan festival, and so it was named St. Valentine's Day.

These many years later, the greetings we send on February 14 are called "valentines." Giving these cards is a way to let people know that we care about them. The cards remind us of St. Valentine who died because of his love and concern for others.

Divine Liturgy Schedule

This Weekend, February 13-14: Sunday of the Leper

Saturday, February 13, at 4:00 p.m.:

✠ Tom George by Bob & Fran Saseen

✠ Special Intention

Sunday, February 14, at 10:30 a.m.:

✠ 40-Day Mass for Julia Tappe & Sister Mary Thomasina John by their nephews & nieces

✠ Shirley Dietz by Steve & Mike Linton

Weekday Masses

Monday, February 15: No Mass. Msgr Day off.

Tuesday, February 16 at 12:05 p.m.:

✠ Rosella Saseen, parents Nancepe & Helen, grandparents Shikrey & Helen Saseen by her Will

✠ Julia Tappe by Mike & Steve Linton

Wednesday, February 17 at 12:05 p.m.:

✠ Sister Mary Thomasina John by Jean Weisner and Family

✠ Tom George by Esther Khoury

Thursday, February 18 at 12:05 p.m.:

✠ Julia Tappe by Jean Weisner Weisner and Family

✠ Anna Marie McGlumphy (Anniversary) by Jerry McGlumphy and children

Friday, February 19 at 5:30 p.m.: Stations of the Cross, Benediction and Lenten Meal

✠ Helen Fielding by her husband Don Fielding (FL) & his special intentions

✠ Kay Garvey by Lou, Charlotte, Emmalena and Louie Khourey

Next Weekend, February 20-21: Sunday of the Hemorrhaging woman

Saturday, February 20, at 4:00 p.m.:

✠ Robert Rose by Dave and Debbie Sengewalt

✠ John Wilson by Vic Canestraro

Sunday, February 21, at 10:30 a.m.:

✠ Dale Seidler Sr., by his wife Nettie and Family

✠ Shirley Dietz by Bill & Carol Dougherty

Calendar of Parish Events at a Glimpse

Soup & Hoagie Sale Mon. & Tue, February 15, 16 Wednesday, February 17 → → Thursday, February 18 → →	– sponsored by the Women’s Society Work Day for Soup & Hoagie Sale – starting at 9 a.m. 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Pick Up Day for Soup & Hoagies in the Cedar Hall 11:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. Pick Up Day for soup & Hoagies in the Cedar Hall
St. Maron Dinner Week of March 7 → → → → Sunday, March 13 → → → →	[more information in future bulletins] Work Days for St. Maron Dinner – starting at 9 a.m. St. Maron Dinner served – 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Palm Sunday, March 20	The Passion of the Lord
Easter Sunday, March 27	The Resurrection of the Lord
Lebanese Bake Sale Sunday, April 3 → → → → Sunday, April 10 → → → → Mon.-Thu., April 11 thru 14 → Wed.-Thur., April 13-14 → →	–Sponsored by Women’s Society Orders & Payment Due for Lebanese Bake Sale Spinach Preparation – starting after 10:30 a.m. Mass Baking Days – starting at 9 a.m. the dough will be ready to shape & fill Order Pick-Up Days for Lebanese Bake Sale – from 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
St. Maron Dinner – Starts 9 am Monday, March 7 th → → → → → Wednesday, March 9 th → → → Thursday, March 10 th → → → → Saturday, March 12 th → → → → Sunday, March 13 th → → → →	Work Days for St. Maron Dinner – <u>No Work on Tuesday & Friday</u> Baking Cookies for Dessert Cook & Shred Chicken Make Kibbee Set Up Hall for Dinner St. Maron Dinner Served – 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Hall Rental	Saturday, April 16, 2016
Hall Rental	Saturday, October 8, 2016
Mahrajan (Festival)	Sunday, August 14 (Mass at 10:30 a.m. and booths open at noon)

Stations of the Cross & Light Dinner (All Fridays during Lent after 5:30 p.m. Mass)

Every Friday during Lent, we celebrate the Mass at 5:30 p.m. and Stations of the Cross at 6:00 p.m., followed by Benediction of the Cross. The “*Stations of the Cross*” is a devotion which consists of following the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ by recalling the fourteen prominent events that took place from the time of the trial under Pontius Pilate until His death and burial on Mount Calvary.

We give thanks to the Cedar Club members who did sponsor the first Lenten Meal on Friday, February 12, and on Good Friday, March 25, following the Friday prayers. Also we offer thanks to the generous families who will sponsor the light meals during the other Fridays of Lent.

Date:	Volunteers:
2 nd Friday, February 19	Meal Sponsor: MaryAnn Cater, & Nini Miller
3 rd Friday, February 26	Meal Sponsors: The Fadoul & Duffy Families
4 th Friday, March 4	Meal Sponsor: Thomasina Geimer, Kim Gibbons, Charlotte Khourey, Shirley Bine Pope Francis asked that this day is a time of special prayer to “be 24 hours for the Lord.”
5 th Friday, March 11	Meal Family Sponsor: Chris & Jeannette Wakim
6 th Friday, March 18	Meal Sponsor: Carol Dougherty, Mike Linton & Msgr. Bakhos
Good Friday, March 25	Meal Sponsor: The Cedar Club & Parishioners

Happy Valentine Day

A friend sent an early "Valentine" to see if it will make it around the world by Feb. 14th.

For God so loVed the world,

That He gAve

His onLy

BegottEn

SoN

That whosoever

Believes In Him

Should Not perish,

But have Everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Soup & Hoagie Sale (*Pick-up Days: Wed. & Thur., Feb. 17 & 18*)

The Women's Society of Our Lady of Lebanon Church has scheduled its Soup & Hoagie Sale.

Quarts of **Homemade Soups** Include: *Chicken Noodle Soup, Chicken & Rice Soup, Chili, Ham & Bean Soup, Lentil Soup, Potato Soup, Vegetable Beef Soup, Meatless Vegetable Soup* available for \$6.50 per quart and *Stuffed Pepper Soup* available for \$8.00 per quart.

Three Hoagies will be available: Ham & Swiss, Italian or Turkey & Cheese. Cost is: \$7.00 each.

Pick-Up-Days: Wednesday, February 17th, from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; OR

Thursday, February 18th, from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

To make this event a success we need several volunteers Tuesday and Wednesday, February 16th and 17th. We need helpers to assemble, label and package the Hoagies and to packing the orders for pick up. We also need several volunteers to make and donate desserts. In the past items such as: *Pies, Texas Sheet Cake or other cakes, brownies, any flavor fudge, Lebanese treats (such as twist cookies, coconut cake, pizelles), sugar free or nut free items, etc.* Additional order forms will be available at the church entrance. Quantities are limited. Take Out Only.

Thanks to all individuals who have already volunteered to make and donate soup, to make and donate desserts, to give of your time and talent for our sale, or to make a Cash Donation which help defray expenses.

The kitchen in the Cedar Hall will be used as follows: Saturday & Sunday Feb 13th 14th preparing stuffed pepper soup; Monday, February 15th, preparing Vegetable Beef Soup and Tuesday, February 16th, preparing Chicken Noodle Soup.

St. Maron Dinner (*Sunday, March 13, from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m*)

St. Maron Donations Welcomed

We greatly appreciate all donations for food, ingredients, paper products, and general expenses for the St. Maron Dinner. Please enclosed your donation in an envelope marked "St. Maron Dinner Donation" and put it in the Offering Basket or mail to: *Our Lady of Lebanon Church, St. Maron Dinner Donation, 2216 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003.* Any donation large or small will help this event become one of the best ever.

Our St. Maron Lebanese Dinner will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on **Sunday, March 13.** Take out will be available. Plan to bring your family, friends, and neighbors.

Tickets purchased at the Door cost full price: \$17.00 Adult and \$8.00 Child (under 12). *Early Bird Discounted Tickets that are PAID in Advance by SUNDAY, MARCH 6th, cost \$15.00 Adult & \$7.00 Child (under 12).* You should soon receive your St. Maron Dinner mailing inviting you to purchase your tickets early and be able to take advantage of the Early Bird Discounted Ticket prices. Additional "St. Maron Dinner – Ticket Order Forms" and additional sheets for the 50/50 Raffle and Gift Basket Raffle will also soon be available at the church entrance (or call the church office at 304-233-1688 or Charlotte at 304-639-1372) to arrange to purchase tickets.

Our delicious homemade Lebanese menu (*valued at over \$20 each*) includes: *kibbee, grape leaves, hummus, chicken & rice, vegetable, salad, pita bread, yogurt, dessert & beverage* (no tax is added).

The dinner will also feature a bake sale of homemade treats, free door prizes, a 50/50 Raffle, and the "Under the Sea" Gift Basket Raffle which will feature several bottles of wine.

\$25 Donation for Easter Lillies *(Due Friday, March 25)*

Easter Lillies in memory of loved ones to decorate the church and the tomb of Christ are sponsored by the following generous parishioners:

☼ Gladys Howard & Louise N. & Louise H. Khourey, Sr., by Lou & Charlotte Khourey & Family

Diocesan Appeal

The Annual Lenten Appeal for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon is now taking place. A copy of a letter from Bishop Elias Zaidan was sent to every family in the mail, together with a special gift. The Eparchy relies upon you to support our Maronite parishes, like this one, and train our future Maronite priests. Every family is asked to participate in the Appeal at a level which is meaningful for them and be generous. You can make your donation with a check or credit card. Our parish's goal for this year's Appeal is \$3,000.00. Please be generous and support your Eparchy. Thank you.

Please Pray for Those on Our Prayer List

Please Remember Those Hospitalized Recently in Your Prayers

Barb Sobota, Joe McCutcheon, Dorothy Kupchak, Gene Howard (brother of Charlotte Khourey)

Also Please Pray for Those Who Asked Us to Pray for Them

Mary Ryncarz, Rizzo Palotay, Dolores Oser, Jonas George, Josephine Weidman, Lucille Gibbons, Nick Bedway, Paige McCoy (niece of Millet, Gina & Linda), Peggy Justice, Clara J. Morris, Shirley & Jim George, Mary Margaret Blum, Jim Thomas (father of Diane Frenn), Carrie Jane (Powell) Parodi (daughter of Eva Lee Powell),

Happy Birthday

February 14: Diane Frenn
 February 15: Nettie Seidler
 February 16: Dave Sengewalt
 February 17: Rebecca DiFabrizio
 February 18: Barb McLaughlin
 February 21: Louie Khourey
 February 27: MaryAnn Carl

Your Church Support Last Week

\$2,498.00	Sunday Collection
354.00	Diocesan Appeal
101.00	Candles
150.00	Donations to the church
135.00	Donations in Memory of Kay Garvey
1,711.78	Donation toward the Renovation of the Basement Hall
240.00	Parking
127.00	Utilities
30.00	Donation to Poor Families
\$5,346.78	Total Deposits: <i>May God reward you abundantly for supporting your spiritual home!</i>

Brass Plaque for the Basement Hall

Please remember in your prayers the following additional benefactors
 who contributed toward the Restoration of the Basement Hall 2016

–Msgr. Bakhos Chidiac, Pastor

Diamond (\$500 & over)

OLOL Cedar Club, Patrick & Jacqueline Petros,

Gold (\$200-\$499)

Holly Bine (Memorial), Joe & Nikki Popovich, Mark Alan Schroeder,

Silver (\$100-\$199)

Anonymous, Mary Margaret Blum, Edward Bris (Memorial), Al Depto & Mary C. Davis, Sandra Dusick, Frank & Anna Marie Duymich, Millet & Susie Fadoul, Kay Garvey (Memorial), Sue Jochum, Drs. Rajai & Nahla Khoury, The PJ Lenz Family, Sylvia Long, Jerry McGlumphy Family, Chris & Jennifer Means, Mike & Judy Sofka, Al & Josephine Weidman,
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Remodeling of the Old Basement Financial Report (By February 10, 2016)

Cost of the Project	Donations received	Remaining Balance
\$20,948.42	3,915.00	\$17,033.42

We appreciate every donation small or great to defray the cost of this project.

Old Basement Remodeling Done

The old basement was stripped from all dark paneling then painted and lit with LED system. The work was completed on Friday, February 12th. A group of ladies will arrange the hall then a professional cleaning will follow next week. The job costs the church over \$20,000.

What's New?***Congratulations to Shaun Hancher!***

On February 6, 2016, he received 3 Superior 1 honor ratings on his tuba and also a Superior 1 rating on his violin. He will now do three recordings to be sent down state to be heard and possibly played at the WV State Music Teachers Conference in March. Shaun has also received 1st Chair ranking in the WV All-State Band on his tuba.

Around Us***Lenten Retreat*** (Saturday, March 12, 2016)

Where: National Shrine, North Jackson. Subject: Kingdom of God and Kingdom of mercy

When: Saturday, March 12, 2016. Master of retreat Rev. George Hajj

Registration: \$75.00 including breakfast, lunch and dinner. Info.: 914-964-3070

Easter Reflection**40 Days & 40 Ways to Make the Most of Lent This Year**

Lent is an annual opportunity to check up on the state of your spiritual health. The three traditional pathways of Lent take you through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. In prayer we strengthen our connection to God. Fasting asks us to let go of habits that get in the way of our ability to love God, ourselves, and others. Through almsgiving, we come to see others as God sees them -as worthy of our love and sharing.

Here, for the 40 days from Ash Monday to the beginning of Holy Week, are 40 personal invitations to wake up your spiritual life and put more meaning in your daily living. Make use of the list as you see fit, realizing that if you miss a few along the way, that's alright -your intent to make this Lent meaningful is what counts the most.

Enriching your prayer life

- 1- **Change the channel:** Ash Monday signals a major change in how you'll live the next 40 days. Signal that change by skipping TV all day.

- 2- **Feed your soul:** Many people today are overworked and undernurtured. Schedule weekly dates to do something fulfilling alone -browse an antique shop, listen to a favorite album, visit an art museum. Start today.
- 3- **Eat light:** Cut back on the size of your meals today (and each Friday during Lent). Recognize your hunger as an expression of God-hunger. Give the money saved on food to charities that feed hungry people.
- 4- **Be a Simon the Cyrenean:** Simon helped carry Jesus' cross. Today, offer to help a neighbor, family member, or co-worker with a tough chore. The help can be physical, emotional, or spiritual.
- 5- **Worship with friends or family:** Be attentive to the songs, prayers, and readings. Discuss the sermon after the service.
- 6- **Avoid gossip:** Avoid situations that tempt you to talk negatively about others. When talking about others, say nice things or nothing at all.
- 7- **Send a message:** Write a letter to someone from whom you're estranged, seeking to reestablish your friendship. If you need to, apologize and ask forgiveness. If appropriate, offer your own forgiveness.
- 8- **Give it up:** Pick one habit that drags you down or keeps you from living fully. Just for today, let go of it. Fill that emptiness with something positive.
- 9- **Share a meal:** Make a meal and bring it to a shut-in neighbor or friend. Or invite someone to a meal at your home.
- 10- **Rise and pray:** Get up a half-hour early today and spend the time in prayer. You can meditate, write in a journal, say memorized prayers, or read the Bible.
- 11- **Be complimentary:** Compliment someone on a job well done. Look around your life for an unsung hero and thank that person for his or her diligence, competence, and dedication.
- 12- **Clear away clutter:** Sometimes outward messiness in our lives reflects an inner clutter. Clean up a junk drawer, messy closet, or counter. Then appreciate a job well done.
- 13- **Drop your worries:** Think of the day ahead. Whenever a worry comes to mind, imagine placing it in God's strong hands. Proceed through your day with a lightened heart.
- 14- **Give the shirt off your back:** Look in your closet for good clothes you no longer wear. Donate them where they'll be well used.
- 15- **Keep it in mind:** Memorize a short passage from Scripture and repeat it to yourself during the day. Use it as a grace at your dinner meal.
- 16- **Skip the sweets:** Forgo sweets today, but pay attention to the taste of what you do eat. Ask God to fill the hunger of your heart.
- 17- **Tune into a Station:** Pick one of the Stations of the Cross (Jesus Accepts his Cross, Jesus Falls, etc.), meditating on how it relates to your life. Remember Jesus' love and courage.
- 18- **Take a stand:** Write a letter to a public official or a newspaper or magazine, stating your views on a moral issue that concerns you. Send a call for change.
- 19- **Stretch your mind:** Read a book, watch a movie, or see a play. Try on a new perspective or view of life.
- 20- **Say your bedtime prayers:** If you're able, get down on your knees before bedtime and say your prayers. Thank God for your blessings. Say bedtime prayers with any children in your home.
- 21- **Recommit:** Make a list of the roles you play in life (for example, husband, supervisor, grandmother, church member) and list a personal goal for each role. Recommit and focus on those goals.
- 22- **Be a secret Samaritan:** Do a good deed today that no one will know about. Make someone's life easier without them catching on.
- 23- **Compose yourself:** Write a psalm of praise. This is great to do as a family. Read samples from the Book of Psalms, then draft a version of your own, referring to events in your lives.
- 24- **Do a quick fix:** Do that pesky home-repair job you've been putting off. You'll feel better about yourself and you'll have more energy for living.
- 25- **Hit the trail:** Take a long, leisurely stroll with no destination in mind. As you walk, pay attention to what God is saying to you -in your mind and heart, and through nature.

- 26- **Travel lighter:** Today, and for the rest of Lent, give away one possession every few days to someone who can use it more than you. Make more room in your life for God.
- 27- **Have a good laugh:** Rent a funny movie or call a friend who always makes you laugh. Loosen any grip sadness might have on your heart.
- 28- **Stick to it:** If you're tempted to abandon a project or slough off a duty, hang in there until it's completed. Learn from the experience just how strong you can be.
- 29- **Be green but growing:** Pray for someone you envy today. Pray that God will continue to bless that person. Ask God to help you see your own blessings.
- 30- **Take it nice and easy:** Today, don't rush anything. Take a slower pace in all that you do. Be aware of the many moments of your life, and live each one fully.
- 31- **Repent:** Examine your conscience and express your sorrow over wrongdoings. Be willing to let go of your sins (failings) as you ask God's help in restoring you to goodness (wholeness).
- 32- **Visit the sick:** Join up with friends or family to visit someone you know in a hospital or nursing home. Don't rush through the visit; stay as long as the patient is comfortable having you. If you don't know anyone, visit anyway and strike up a conversation.
- 33- **Study the Scriptures:** Take the time to read an entire Gospel. Read with an open heart, ready to find meaning and direction.
- 34- **Die in little ways:** Throughout the day, sacrifice small pleasures to become aware of deeper needs and longings in yourself. Eat little, work longer, and turn off the radio.
- 35- **Look for the good:** Take time to see the good in your life: family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Tell someone today that one way he or she manifests the goodness of God.
- 36- **Accept your Cross:** Each of us has hardships to bear. Look within to find the strength to accept the cross in life that is uniquely yours. Pray for help.
- 37- **Count on Resurrection:** The Cross is not the end of the story. We believe that Jesus not only died but rose again to show us the way to eternal life. Today, pray for hope.
- 38- **Listen up:** Listen to those you encounter today. Don't rebut, don't refute. Put aside what you're planning to say and just listen. Notice how the tone of the conversation changes.
- 39- **Thank God:** Make a gratitude list, a quick list of ten or more things for which you are grateful. Let your mind range from the sublime to the ridiculous. Give thanks.
- 40- **Keep it going:** Think back on the past 40 days and select one spiritual discipline you will continue. Write it down and tell one other person of your decision.

Easter Meditation

The Joy of God's Presence

“Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones.” (Isaiah 49:13)

Money and success do not make us joyful. In fact many wealthy and successful people are also anxious, fearful, and often quite somber. In contrast, many others who are very poor laugh very easily and often show great joy.

Joy and laughter are the gifts of living in the presence of God and trusting that tomorrow is not worth worrying about. It always strikes me that rich people have much money, while poor people have much time. And where there is much time life can be celebrated. There is no reason to romanticize poverty, but when I see the fears and anxieties of many who have all the goods the world has to offer, I can understand Jesus' words: “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.” Money and success are not the problem; the problem is the absence of free, open time when God can be encountered in the present and life can be lifted up in its simple beauty and goodness.

Dear Lord, whenever I begin to get anxious about money or success, remind me that your presence is greater than these.

Easter Meditation

“Behold I make all things new”

Let us walk together as One into the season of The Glorious Resurrection. It begins at the tomb. Here we are completely devastated at the scandal of Our Lord’s torture and death. Our hope in the promise of The Messianic Kingdom is plunged into decision. Never before have we felt so alone. We have given everything to him and for what?

It seems so surreal. Did all this really happen? Since Friday, we have fallen into Sabbath’s rest. Our eyes hurt from all the tears. All of our anger is exhausted from furiously searching out the details of what really happened. Who is to blame? What more should we have done? Now that the Sabbath is over let us go to the tomb.

It has been opened. Where is the guard? Where is His body? Where is OUR LORD?! We fall to the ground as if everything has been stolen from us. Our dreams are taken. Our Lord is gone. Our future clouded. Our past is wasted.

The cries of a million souls pour out of our heart and out of our eyes. Our body cannot contain the grief. We are bent over in the shame of self-blame and of the un-forgiveness of our own selfishness. We fall limp from exhaustion.

Suddenly we feel the gentle warmth of the morning sun on our face. We begin to feel the grainy sand beneath us. We grasp the ground of a thousand ages in our hands. We begin to hear the stirring from within us of the trees and the birds all around us. We look up and we are flooded with the knowledge and understanding of all of our ancestors, and notice the rock tomb full of radiant majesty. It is empty and magnificent. The joy of all of the generations of smiles comes upon us. When we rise, we stand with the strength of angels. We turn to see who is coming behind us and we feel all humanity moves with us. “Who are you?” He says to us, “Who are you? All flesh rises today in the body of The King. The emanation of Glory has come to you. “You who are in Me, RISE UP!!”

We are no longer the same. We see and believe! It is a light so bright it blinds us. It blinds us with certainty. The infusion of peace is so strong that all doubt flees us. We are filled with the desire to RUN into the darkness with delirium and joy.

Our soul is experiencing the transcendence of time when suddenly, we hear the cries of our neighbors. Their voices seem to echo into our hearts. Our body begins to shake and the heaviness of these days is beginning to be felt. Our neighbors see who we are. They see our weakness and our frailties. We, who but a minute ago had the strength of angels, are reduced to pity. Yet, their voices transcend the depths of our heart.

IT IS THE MESSIAH! He is HERE! ALL FLESH HAS RISEN TODAY!

We cry out to them, “Who are you? Speak to me and let me hear my Beloved. Here, take everything. It is Yours. You will not find me running from You now. Holy are you! Holy are you! Holy are you!”

“What? You think am crazy. I am your neighbor. These are my hands and my feet. These are my clothes. What do you mean? Go ahead and touch me. See, it is I. What? Why am talking with you?

Do you not know that you are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh? You are my life. You are own self. We are one. One in Christ, forever. Amen!”

We will never be the same again. In every soul, we experience Our Lord. We lead them into his eternal banquet of his body and blood where he opens their eyes and hearts in His Person and transcends time beginning at the empty tomb, the womb of His Glory.

A Time to Laugh (284)

Trivia

Q. What occurs more often in December than any other month?

A. Conception.

Q. Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of what?

A. Their birthplace

Q. Most boat owners name their boats. What is the most popular boat name requested?

A. Obsession

Q. If you were to spell out numbers, how far would you have to go until you would find the letter "A"?

A. One thousand

Q. What do bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers all have in common?

A. All invented by women.

Q. What is the only food that doesn't spoil?

A. Honey

Q. There are more collect calls on this day than any other day of the year?

A. Father's Day

Q. What trivia fact about Mel Blanc (voice of Bugs Bunny) is the most ironic?

A. He was allergic to carrots.

Q. What is an activity performed by 40% of all people at a party?

A. Snoop in your medicine cabinet.

--In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes.

When you pulled on the ropes the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. Hence the phrase, "goodnight, sleep tight."

--It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month we know today as the honeymoon.

--In Scotland, a new game was invented. It was entitled Gentlemen Only Ladies Forbidden.... and thus the word GOLF entered into the English language.

--Somebody has well said that there are only two kinds of people in the world.

There are those who wake up in the morning and say, "*Good morning, Lord,*" and there are those who wake up in the morning and say, "*Good Lord, it's morning.*"

Oooooooooooooooooops!

One day a little girl was sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly noticed that her mother has several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head.

She looked at her mother and inquisitively asked, "Why are some of your hairs white, Mom?" Her mother replied, "Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white." The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then said, "Momma, how come ALL of grandma's hairs are white?"

A Blonde Joke

A blonde goes to the post office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards.

She says to the clerk, "May I have 50 Christmas stamps?"

The clerk says, "What denomination?"

The woman says, "God help us. Has it come to this?"

Give me 6 Catholic, 12 Presbyterian, 10 Lutheran and 22 Baptists."