



July 16, 2023
Bulletin #29

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church

2216 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

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

E-Mail: ololwv@comcast.net • Web Site: www.ololwv.com

Msgr. Bakhos Chidiac, Pastor

Mary Lee Porter, Ed.D. Organist



8th Sunday of Pentecost

- *Weekend Masses: **Saturdays: Mass at 4:00 p.m.**
 Sundays: Mass at 10:30 a.m.
- *Weekday Masses: **Mondays and Wednesdays and Fridays: No Mass.** Pastor's office work.
 Tuesdays and Thursdays Mass at 12:00 Noon
- ***Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament:** Every 1st Saturday and Sunday of the month after 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, Mary Stees, Susan (John) Burns, Mark McLaughlin, Liz Murad
- *Choir Members: Lou Khourey, Robert Harris, Joe Simon, Shelly Hancher, Holly Stahl
- *Bulletin Coordinator: Thomasina Geimer
- *Altar Server: Earl Duffy and Joe Roxby
- *Altar Boy: Christopher AlKhouri
- *Cedar Club: Linda Duffy, President
- *Women's Society: Jeannette Wakim, President



- ***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
- ***Remember the Church in your Last Will & Testament**: Her prayers will accompany you to heaven

8th Sunday of Pentecost

Readings: Is 42:1-9; Rom 8:28-39 and Mt 13:36:43

Jesus' use of parables was no innovation in the context of his time and environment: there are many instances in the Old Testament of this way of teaching and the rabbis of Jesus' time used it continuously. However, Jesus' method undoubtedly did cause surprise. It followed a sermon which he began by plainly proclaiming that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and therefore that all must turn from sin to the Lord. With the teaching in parables, it is not the subject matter which is different, but his hidden way of making it understood.

Suffice to say that Jesus did not make use of parables as a more expressive or clearer way of teaching. Doubtless the images clarify and are an aid to understanding, but they also puzzle. Only the one who begins to search, to ponder, to inquire, spurred on by a narrator who challenges his hearers to the utmost, will be in a position to understand. Each evangelist in his own way gives the reasons for the parables. For Matthew, understanding the parables presupposes a heart open to revelation, sincerely desiring to welcome the Word and to put it into practice — in spite of the obstacles it meets and its apparent setbacks.

Is it not true for us also that at certain times, everything conspires to prevent us from receiving this Word and to make us doubt its coming into the world? It is two thousand years since 'the Sower went out to sow, and sometimes it is very tempting to say: what a mess he made of it, how much has been lost! And does our own reaction to the wild extravagance of God consist of grasping without delay the word which we hear, so that we, in our turn, are possessed by it, caught up in the way of obedience and missionary zeal for his service? If so, then we too understand the parables!

Jesus performed 37 Miracles.

We will publish them weekly in order to strengthen our faith that Jesus is indeed the Son of God who has divine power to heal and raise the dead by a Word from his mouth. Blessed are those who believe without seeing Him.

The 20th miracle of Jesus when he Walked on the Water

Right away Jesus made the disciples get into the boat. He had them go on ahead of him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Then he sent the crowd away. After he had sent them away, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone. The boat was already a long way from land. It was being pounded by the waves because the wind was blowing against it. Shortly before dawn, Jesus went out to the disciples. He walked on the lake. They saw him walking on the lake and were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said. And they cried out in fear. Right away Jesus called out to them, "Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, is it you?" Peter asked. "If it is, tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," Jesus said. So, Peter got out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus. 30 But when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid. He began to sink. He cried out, "Lord! Save me!" Right away Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "Your faith is so small!" he said. "Why did you doubt me?" When they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those in the boat worshiped Jesus. They said, "You really are the Son of God!" (Matthew 14:22-33)

This Weekend: Saturday-Sunday, July 15-16

Saturday, July 15, Mass at 4:00 p.m.:

- ✠ Bob Sengewalt by his grandchildren: Jeff, Courtney and Patrick Sengewalt
- ✠ Rosella Saseen, parents Nancepe & Helen, grandparents Shikrey & Helen Saseen by her last Will
- ✠ Robert Shutler by Mary M. Shutler
- ✠ Special Intention

Sunday, July 16, Mass at 10:30 a.m.:

- ✠ LaVerne Thomas (Anniversary) by Dr. Adel, Diane & Justin Frenn and Andreah & Zack Riedel
- ✠ Khalil & Sadie & Maria Harb and Annette & Al Togliatti by Jamil Harb (Troy, MI)
- ✠ Virginia Khourey Bryan by Lou & Charlotte and Emmalena and Louie Khourey

† George AlKhouri by Mary Stees and Libby Magnone

Coming Weekdays Mass Schedule

Monday, July 17: No Mass. NAM Convention

Tuesday, July 18 Mass at Noon:

- † Rose Ann Polsinelli (Anniversary) by her daughter Rosalie Conti
- † Sylvia Long, her husband Arthur, and her son Mark by her last will
- † Tony George (Birthday) by his daughter Margaret George (MN)
- † Walter Elwartoski (Birthday) by his son Richard

Wednesday, July 19: No Mass. NAM Convention

Thursday, July 20 Mass at Noon: (Feast Day of Saint Elias)

- † Rosella Saseen, parents Nancepe & Helen, grandparents Shikrey & Helen Saseen by her last Will
- † Janis & George Thomas (Ohio) by their last will
- † Chris DeMuth by Carol Dougherty

Friday, July 21: No Mass. NAM Convention

Next Weekend: Saturday-Sunday, July 22-23

Saturday, July 22, Mass at 4:00 p.m.:

- † Richard Frazier (Anniversary) by his wife Luane
- † Margaret Emmerth (Anniversary) by her sister Helen Benline
- † Robert Shutler by Carol Dougherty (OK)

Sunday, July 23, Mass at 10:30 a.m.:

- † George AlKhouri by Mary Stees and Libby Magnone
- † Mike & Sue Linton and their parents Joe and Frances Linton by Steve Linton
- † John Shibben by Lisa & Bernie Paul

Coming Parish Events

Sunday, July 9 th	OLOL Women's Society Meeting after 10:30 a.m. Mass
Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament	Every 1 st Saturday and Sunday of the month after Mass followed by blessing with healing oil from Saint Sharbel for good health.
Sunday, August 13 until 7:00 pm	Mahrajan (Festival) at Oglebay Park, Levenson Shelter 10:00 a.m. Outdoor Mass at Oglebay (No Mass at the church)
Thanksgiving Bake Sale	Date will be announced later.
Christmas Party	Sunday, December 3 rd after Mass (Dinner will be served at noon)

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

In preparation of the year of the Eucharist that will take place in the fall of next year, we will celebrate the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament **every 1st Saturday and Sunday of the month after Mass**. Please come and adore Jesus present in the Eucharist.

The words and acts of Christ at the institution of the Eucharist stand at the heart of the celebration; the Eucharistic meal is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, the sacrament of his real presence. Christ fulfills in a variety of ways his promise to be always with his own even to the end of the world. But Christ's mode of presence in the Eucharist is unique. Jesus said over the bread and wine of the Eucharist: "This is my Body ... this is my Blood ..." What Christ declared is true, and this truth is fulfilled every time the Eucharist is celebrated. The Church confesses Christ's real, living and active presence in the Eucharist.

Birthdays Wishes in the Coming Month:

July 16: Payton Wilson, Pam Obyc

July 20: Shirley George

July 22: Grace Klein, Mark Boehm

July 26: Anna Marie Duymich
 July 30: Dee Shiben, Susan John Burns
 August 2: Rosella C. DeMuth
 August 10: Thomasina Geimer
 August 16: Tara George Musilli

<i>Your Church Support Last Week</i>	
\$2,184.00	Sunday Collection
74.00	candles
32.00	Coffee hour
300.00	Donation to church
1,190.00	Mahrajan
358.00	utilities
\$4,138.00	Total Deposits: <i>May God reward you abundantly for supporting your spiritual home!</i> Finance Committee: Lou Khourey, Mary Stees, Linda Duffy, Susan Burns, Liz Murad

Please Pray for Those on Our Prayer List

(Note: Please call Msgr. Bakhos if you need your name added to our Prayer List. HIPPA regulations)

Earl Duffy, Fran Saseen, Mary Stees, Rex Strawn, Mary Thomas, Sandra DeMuth, Ken Imer, Justin Frenn, Elia Frenn, Patty Fahey, Jamie Stoneking (nephew of Charlotte and Lou Khourey), Lou Anne Blazier, Patty Olinsky, Sarah Volk (aunt of GiGi Rice), Julia Schiess (daughter of Leo Bleifus), Earl Ragase, Patrick Sengewalt, Renee Beabout (daughter of Marge John), Jack Hogan (infant son of Mark & Michaela Hogan & great nephew of Lou Khourey), Fred Schweizer (brother of our organist Mary Lee Porter),

What's New?

Condolences: Debbie Saseen

The pastor and the parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Wheeling, offer their heartfelt sympathy to the Saseen Family on the loss of their beloved Debbie who passed away in Morgantown. Debbie was the daughter-in-law of the late Jerry & Marge Saseen. May the Almighty God grant repose of the soul to His handmaid and we extend the parish's condolences to her Family in their time of sorrow.

Mahrajan Update (Sunday, August 13, 2023)

--This year we will celebrate our 90th Lebanese Festival (Mahrajan) at Oglebay Park on Sunday, August 13.
 --Outdoor Mass at 10:00 a.m. not 10:30 a.m. There will be no Mass at the church the day of the Festival.
 --**Net Mahrajan Raffle Cash Prize reached so far: \$6,550.00.** Only 1,000 numbered tickets were printed this year. Buy your tickets before they are sold. The drawing that will take place at the stage of the Festival at Oglebay Park around 6:00 p.m. in presence of everyone. Good luck.

2023 Mahrajan Golden Sponsors:

The following Mahrajan supporters are honoring the Blessed Mother on her Assumption feast day by sponsoring items needed for the Mahrajan. They are adding more joy to the hearts of the Community and our guests in defying the increasing cost of materials. May the Blessed Mother, the Queen of heaven and earth, lead them to her Son, the Lord of the Resurrection and grant them an honorable place with the righteous and the just. Their names will be published in next year Ad Book as Golden Mahrajan Sponsors.
 --Susan & Ron Burns sponsored the red and white tent that will be used as welcome center at the entrance of the Mahrajan. Also they sponsored the burner of the sajj to be used for baking zaatar bread.
 --An Anonymous person, Leo Bleifus, Don & Lori Nickerson sponsored the six Credit Card Readers.
 --George & Susan Saseen sponsored the Lebanese National costume outfits of our church dance troupe that will perform a Dabke at the festival.
 --An anonymous person sponsored the Lebanese Wine to be tasted and sold at the festival.

More Sponsors needed: (please call Monsignor Bakhos at 304-233-1688)

- Pop & Water \$500
- Signs over the booths \$600
- Aprons with Lebanese Logo \$1,500
- Shish Kebab lamb \$2,000
- Souvenir Ad Book printing \$3,000
- T-Shirts (cost will be estimated later)

Already purchased by the church:

- Two refrigerators for pop and water. Also one Sajj (woke) for Lebanese cheese pizza and Zaatar bread.
- Four red tents 10x15 feet each to be used for our special booths.
- Many souvenirs from Lebanon will be sold at the Market Place

More Information:

- All tables under four tents are rented. Available are some picnic tables under trees.
- If you have a friend or know someone who is interested in receiving correspondence about our Festival, please submit their addresses to Msgr. Bakhos.

Spirituality: The 21 Ecumenical Councils**1st COUNCIL OF NICAIA. Year: 325**

Summary: The Council of Nicaea lasted two months and twelve days. Three hundred and eighteen bishops were present. Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, assisted as legate of Pope Sylvester. The Emperor Constantine was also present. To this council we owe the Nicene Creed, defining against Arius the true Divinity of the Son of God, and the fixing of the date for keeping Easter (against the Quartodecimans).

2nd COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE. Year: 381

Summary: The First General Council of Constantinople, under Pope Damasus and the Emperor Theodosius I, was attended by 150 bishops. It was directed against the followers of Macedonius, who impugned the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. To the above-mentioned Nicene Creed it added the clauses referring to the Holy Spirit and all that follows to the end.

3rd COUNCIL OF EPHEBUS. Year: 431

Summary: The Council of Ephesus, of more than 200 bishops, presided over by St. Cyril of Alexandria representing Pope Celestine I, defined the true personal unity of Christ, declared Mary the Mother of God (*theotokos*) against Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, and renewed the condemnation of Pelagius.

4th Council CHALCEDON. Year: 451

Summary: The Council of Chalcedon -- 150 bishops under Pope Leo the Great and the Emperor Marcian -- defined the two natures (Divine and human) in Christ against Eutyches, who was excommunicated.

5th Second COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE. Year: 553

Summary: The Second General Council of Constantinople, of 165 bishops under Pope Vigilius and Emperor Justinian I, condemned the errors of Origen and certain writings (The Three Chapters) of Theodoret, of Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia and of Ibas, Bishop of Edessa; it further confirmed the first four general councils, especially that of Chalcedon whose authority was contested by some heretics.

6th Third COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE. Years: 680-681

Summary: The Third General Council of Constantinople, under Pope Agatho and the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus, was attended by the Patriarchs of Constantinople and of Antioch, 174 bishops, and the emperor. It put an end to Monothelism by defining two wills in Christ, the Divine and the human, as two distinct principles of operation. It anathematized Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul, Macarius, and all their followers.

7th SECOND COUNCIL OF NICAIA. Year: 787

Summary: The Second Council of Nicaea was convoked by Emperor Constantine VI and his mother Irene, under Pope Adrian I, and was presided over by the legates of Pope Adrian; it regulated the veneration of holy images. Between 300 and 367 bishops assisted.

8th FOURTH COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE. Year: 869

Summary: The Fourth General Council of Constantinople, under Pope Adrian II and Emperor Basil numbering 102 bishops, 3 papal legates, and 4 patriarchs, consigned to the flames the Acts of an irregular council brought

together by Photius against Pope Nicholas and Ignatius the legitimate Patriarch of Constantinople; it condemned Photius who had unlawfully seized the patriarchal dignity. The Photian Schism, however, triumphed in the Greek Church, and no other general council took place in the East.

9th FIRST LATERAN COUNCIL. Year: 1123

Summary: The First Lateran Council, the first held at Rome, met under Pope Callistus II. About 900 bishops and abbots assisted. It abolished the right claimed by lay princes, of investiture with ring and crosier to ecclesiastical benefices and dealt with church discipline and the recovery of the Holy Land from the infidels.

10th SECOND LATERAN COUNCIL. Year: 1139

Summary: The Second Lateran Council was held at Rome under Pope Innocent II, with an attendance of about 1000 prelates and the Emperor Conrad. Its object was to put an end to the errors of Arnold of Brescia.

11th THIRD LATERAN COUNCIL. Year: 1179

Summary: The Third Lateran Council took place under Pope Alexander III, Frederick I being emperor. There were 302 bishops present. It condemned the Albigenses and Waldenses and issued numerous decrees for the reformation of morals.

12th FOURTH LATERAN COUNCIL. Year: 1215

Summary: The Fourth Lateran Council was held under Innocent III. There were present the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, 71 archbishops, 412 bishops, and 800 abbots the Primate of the Maronites, and St. Dominic. It issued an enlarged creed (symbol) against the Albigenses, condemned the Trinitarian errors of Abbot Joachim, and published 70 important reformatory decrees. This is the most important council of the Middle Ages, and it marks the culminating point of ecclesiastical life and papal power.

13th FIRST COUNCIL OF LYONS. Year: 1245

Summary: The First General Council of Lyons was presided over by Innocent IV; the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Aquileia (Venice), 140 bishops, Baldwin II, Emperor of the East, and St. Louis, King of France, assisted. It excommunicated and deposed Emperor Frederick II and directed a new crusade, under the command of St. Louis, against the Saracens and Mongols.

14th SECOND COUNCIL OF LYONS. Year: 1274

Summary: The Second General Council of Lyons was held by Pope Gregory X, the Patriarchs of Antioch and Constantinople, 15 cardinals, 500 bishops, and more than 1000 other dignitaries. It effected a temporary reunion of the Greek Church with Rome. The word *filioque* was added to the symbol of Constantinople and means were sought for recovering Palestine from the Turks. It also laid down the rules for papal elections.

15th COUNCIL OF VIENNE. Years: 1311-1313

Summary: The Council of Vienne was held in that town in France by order of Clement V, the first of the Avignon popes. The Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, 300 bishops, and 3 kings -- Philip IV of France, Edward II of England, and James II of Aragon -- were present. The synod dealt with the crimes and errors imputed to the Knights Templars, the Fraticelli, the Beghards, and the Beguines, with projects of a new crusade, the reformation of the clergy, and the teaching of Oriental languages in the universities.

16th COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE. Years: 1414-1418

The Council of Constance was held during the great Schism of the West, with the object of ending the divisions in the Church. It became legitimate only when Gregory XI had formally convoked it. Owing to this circumstance it succeeded in putting an end to the schism by the election of Pope Martin V, which the Council of Pisa (1403) had failed to accomplish on account of its illegality. The rightful pope confirmed the former decrees of the synod against Wyclif and Hus. This council is thus ecumenical only in its last sessions (42-45 inclusive) and with respect to the decrees of earlier sessions approved by Martin V.

17th COUNCIL OF BASLE/FERRARA/FLORENCE. Years: 1431-1439

Summary: The Council of Basle met first in that town, Eugene IV being pope, and Sigismund Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Its object was the religious pacification of Bohemia. Quarrels with the pope having arisen, the council was transferred first to Ferrara (1438), then to Florence (1439), where a short-lived union with the Greek Church was effected, the Greeks accepting the council's definition of controverted points. The Council of Basle is only ecumenical till the end of the twenty-fifth session, and of its decrees Eugene IV approved only such as dealt with the extirpation of heresy, the peace of Christendom, and the reform of the Church, and which at the same time did not derogate from the rights of the Holy See.

18th FIFTH LATERAN COUNCIL. Years: 1512-1517

Summary: The Fifth Lateran Council sat from 1512 to 1517 under Popes Julius II and Leo X, the emperor being Maximilian I. Fifteen cardinals and about eighty archbishops and bishops took part in it. Its decrees are chiefly disciplinary. A new crusade against the Turks was also planned, but came to naught, owing to the religious upheaval in Germany caused by Luther.

19th COUNCIL OF TRENT .Years: 1545-1563

Summary: The Council of Trent lasted eighteen years (1545-1563) under five popes: Paul III, Julius III, Marcellus II, Paul IV and Pius IV, and under the Emperors Charles V and Ferdinand. There were present 5 cardinal legates of the Holy See, 3 patriarchs, 33 archbishops, 235 bishops, 7 abbots, 7 generals of monastic orders, and 160 doctors of divinity. It was convoked to examine and condemn the errors promulgated by Luther and other Reformers, and to reform the discipline of the Church. Of all councils it lasted longest, issued the largest number of dogmatic and reformatory decrees, and produced the most beneficial results.

20th FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL. Years: 1869-1870

Summary: The Vatican Council was summoned by Pius IX. It met 8 December, 1869, and lasted till 18 July, 1870, when it was adjourned; it is still (1908) unfinished. There were present 49 cardinals, 11 patriarchs, 680 archbishops and bishops, 28 abbots, 29 generals of orders, in all 803. Besides important canons relating to the Faith and the constitution of the Church, the council decreed the infallibility of the pope when speaking *ex cathedra*, i.e. when as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church.

21st SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL. Years: 1962-1965

Wisdom: Prevent N1H1

--by Dr. Vinay Goyal is an MBBS, DRM, DNB

The only portals of entry are the nostrils and mouth/throat. In a global epidemic of this nature, it's almost impossible not coming into contact with H1N1 in spite of all precautions. Contact with H1N1 is not so much of problem as proliferation is.

While you are still healthy and not showing any symptoms of H1N1 infection, in order to prevent proliferation, aggravation of symptoms and development of secondary infections, some very simple steps, not fully highlighted in most official communications, can be practiced (instead of focusing on how to stock N95 or Tamiflu):

- 1- Frequent hand-washing (well highlighted in all official communications).
- 2- "Hands-off-the-face" approach. Resist all temptations to touch any part of face (unless you want to eat, bathe or slap).
- 3- Gargle twice a day with warm salt water (use Listerine if you don't trust salt). H1N1 takes 2-3 days after initial infection in the throat/nasal cavity to proliferate and show characteristic symptoms. Simple gargling prevents proliferation. In a way, gargling with salt water has the same effect on a healthy individual that Tamiflu has on an infected one. Don't underestimate this simple, inexpensive and powerful preventative method.
- 4- Similar to 3 above, clean your nostrils at least once every day with warm salt water. Not everybody may be good at using a Neti pot, but blowing the nose hard once a day and swabbing both nostrils with cotton swabs dipped in warm salt water is very effective in bringing down viral population.
- 5- Boost your natural immunity with foods that are rich in Vitamin C. If you have to supplement with Vitamin C tablets, make sure that it also has Zinc to boost absorption.
- 6- Drink as much of warm liquids (tea, coffee, etc) as you can. Drinking warm liquids has the same effect as gargling, but in the reverse direction. They wash off proliferating viruses from the throat into the stomach where they cannot survive, proliferate or do any harm.

Story: The Owl

I was on the verge of capturing a dream teetering between two states: sleep and consciousness. I could faintly hear a voice calling me in the distance. I pulled the comforter over my head retreating further inside, letting the warmth envelop me, for the images were gone, but the memory of being soothed lingered.

Once again, the burning question came to mind: Could separation by death really sever a lifetime connection? I had no answer. Then the voice called out once more.

“Honey, come here. You have to see this.” ‘The voice belonged to my husband.

“Uh-uh,” I mumbled diving deeper inside my cocoon.

“Really, you do need to see this,” my husband said again.

I wished to be left to the warmth and lingering tranquility. I voiced my objection again.

“I don’t want to; it’s cold out there.”

“Honey, you have got to see what is sitting on the window ledge.”

Jack’s a very tenacious man. I finally relented.

“Is the coffee made?”

“Yes, and I saved you a muffin.”

The coffee and muffin lured me from the bed, but I took my comforter with me. All wrapped up, I headed for the living room and my husband.

“What’s going on?”

“Look out the window,” he pointed smiling.

“I turned and was amazed to see an owl sleeping on the window ledge. It was white, except for a sprinkling of black on the owl’s beak and tips of its feathers.

“Has it been here long?”

“It was here when I woke up.”

“It’s beautiful.” I sat on the floor in front of the window and watched it breathe. “Why do you think it is here?”

“I don’t know; we don’t have owls around here, unless it is a pet, or it escaped from a rescue. It may have bumped into the window chasing something out of the tree.”

“Do you think it may be hurt?”

“It may be stunned or just asleep.”

I thought about that, then another thought suddenly came to mind as I remembered what day it was.

“It would have been Barbara’s birthday today,” I whispered to myself.

My sister, Barbara died six months ago after a 15-month fight with breast cancer. I think of her every day. More than once, I’ve found myself dialing her phone number to share some observation. If she were alive, I’d be talking to her right now. I missed her, and knew I would for a long time. I was still intrigued by the visitor. Then I remembered the dream.

“I dreamt about Barbara and her imaginary childhood companions. She had two mammoth elephants: Tundra and Mundra. She also had a white owl she called Snow. They were in a lush green forest close to a river. It was so powerful, and they seemed so happy to be together; it felt soothing. It left me so calm upon waking that I tried to recapture the dream. It seemed so real, then you started calling me.”

“Barbara may have sent Snow to let you know she’s all right.”

At that very moment, Snow opened its eyes and looked right into mine. For a few moments, we stared at one another with only the glass between us. I reached out and placed my hand against the window almost touching Snow, but for the glass. Its gold eyes bore into my green eyes, and then it turned and flew away.

“What do you think, did Barbara send Snow?”

“Barbara was subtle,” I said smiling.

“Yes, you would’ve sent Tundra or Mundra,” he laughed.

I laughed also, knowing my sister was somewhere laughing too and that our connection, though subtle, would endure forever.

A Time to Laugh (71)

Quick Laughter

-A ventriloquist is performing with his dummy on his lap. He's telling a dumb blonde joke when a young platinum-haired beauty jumps to her feet.

"What gives you the right to stereo type blondes that way?" she demands "What does hair color have to do with my worth as a human being?"

Flustered, the ventriloquist begins to stammer out an apology.

"You keep out of this!" she yells. "I'm talking to that little jerk on your knee!"

-In surgery for a heart attack, a middle-aged woman has a vision of God by her bedside. "Will I die?" she asks.

God says, "No. You have 30 more years to live."

With 30 years to look forward to, she decides to make the best of it. So since she's in the hospital, she gets breast implants, liposuction, a tummy tuck, hair transplants, and collagen injections in her lips. She looks great!

The day she's discharged, she exits the hospital with a swagger, crosses the street, and is immediately hit by an ambulance and killed.

Up in heaven, she sees God. "You said I had 30 more years to live" she complains.

"That's true," says God.

"So what happened?"

God shrugs. "I didn't recognize you."

-Every ten years, the monks in the monastery are allowed to break their vow of silence to speak two words. Ten years go by and it's one monk's first chance. He thinks for a second before saying, "Food bad." Ten years later, he says, "Bed hard." It's the big day, a decade later. He gives the head monk a long stare and says, "I quit."

"I'm not surprised," the head monk says. "You've been complaining ever since you got here."