

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



“Poor Lazarus”

A family I know regularly prayed together on Sundays. They would sit around their large dining room table - there were ten kids - and the dad would read a Gospel, comment on it, and invite the family to share their experiences.

This particular day the dad, Frank, a NYC Firefighter and husband of Jean, read the Gospel we hear in Mass today, the resurrection of Lazarus, to the ten children

After reading the passage, with all the eyes of the kids upon him, Frank said these words, “Poor Lazarus!” Frank explained that Lazarus had already died, and was on his way to heaven, but he had to come back here! The grief and tears of Lazarus’ sisters, family and neighbors had moved Jesus himself to pity, so he raised Lazarus back from the tomb. Lazarus’ sisters were ecstatic, but how did Lazarus feel about it?

It wasn’t till some years later, after Frank himself had died in the Twin towers on 9/11, that his words really hit home and made sense to his family. After Jean lost her husband, and the ten children their father, they were wracked with grief. That is until they sat down one Sunday to pray.

For many months after Frank’s death they were unable to pray. Jean would sit down at the table with the kids, see Frank’s empty chair, and collapse in a ball of tears. But this particular Sunday she gave it another go, and read the Gospel of the day, which happened to be the resurrection of Lazarus. After reading it to the children, her husband Frank’s words came back to her. “Poor Lazarus.” Her grief was lifted, and the family turned a corner. They had been missing their Dad, wishing he were still here, crying that he was no longer with them, but here was this Gospel staring them in the face, and Frank’s words were in their ears.

Sure, Jesus raised him from the dead, brought him back, but Lazarus would one day have to face death again. Why would you want someone to come back if they were already in heaven? If we love someone we want the best for them, not what’s best for us. What’s better than being in heaven? Jean understood, and so did the children.

Continued on next page

FROM THE PASTOR CONTINUED

A social worker who had been assigned to work with the family after 9/11 noticed a dramatic change, and asked Jean if they were doing anything different. “We began to pray again” was Jean’s reply. The social worker was so impressed with the change in attitude of the kids, that she asked Jean if she could teach other grieving families from 9/11 how to pray.

Jean was herself diagnosed with terminal cancer. She went to the Lord in August of 2012, eleven years after her husband. Before she left I asked her if she was afraid for the children. She stared me in the face, as if I had insulted her, and said ‘No, I am not afraid for them, I know they will be fine, because they have faith, which is the most important thing I can give them.’”

The raising of Lazarus prefigures Jesus’ own death and Resurrection. It prefigures our death and Resurrection! Our faith, our Christianity, our Catholicism, is based on an encounter with a living person: Christ crucified and Risen. This encounter happens now, this side of the grave. Death is swallowed up in victory! O death where is your victory! There is no grief, no heartache, no loss, no suffering, no anguish which the Resurrection has not already overcome. Do we truly experience this?

The Resurrection of Christ is not celebrated as a memorial or a thing of the past, but as something that is present and happening today among us. We can draw strength from today’s Gospel, as we advance towards Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and the great celebration of the Easter Triduum, where the Resurrection of Christ awaits us.

Fr. Sean



Thank You: Sharing God’s Blessings Annual Appeal

Thank you to all who have already so generously pledged and donated to the Annual Appeal, Sharing God’s Blessings. If you have not yet pledged, and are wondering why you have not yet received an envelope in the mail, it is because this year the Archdiocese decided not to send out mailings with pledge requests to previous donors. However, I feel these mailings are an effective way to help us participate in the Appeal. Therefore I will be sending out a mailing to the whole parish to ask those who have not yet pledged this year, asking that we consider doing so. We are a parish community, a parish family, and the participation of each member of the family is essential. In the coming week, when you receive the letter in the mail, I invite you to please prayerfully consider your response.

Thank you again,
Fr. Sean

God bless you for your generosity!



Woodcliff Lake UNICO invites you to a Dinner Dance and Auction Fundraiser. Saturday, April 22, 2017 at 6:30 pm. This will be held at Our Lady Mother of the Church McCarthy Center. Full catered buffet dinner by Munno’s of Pearl River and music by Just Jammin’. \$50 per person, adults only and advance payment only. The recipient of this year’s proceeds is Oakland resident, Donna Myher, a math teacher at the Fieldstone Middle School in Montvale. Four years ago Donna was diagnosed with ALS. Medical expenses are placing a financial burden on the family. These funds raised will help defray the cost. Please contact Maria Janicelli by April 7 at (201) 962-8362 or miaj@optonline.net. To donate items for the auction please contact Donna Brown at (201) 788-6571 or dlb6494@aol.com.

Respite Care

Our parish would like to begin again an outreach to one another. Are you a caretaker who needs a break? A ride to an appointment? Or errands run? Or a meal delivered to your door? If yes, your fellow parishioners would like to help. Please contact Judi Quinn. (201) 391-2826 or judiolmc@yahoo.com. All requests will be kept confidential.