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Holy Spirit, thank you for filling our hearts with compassion and for giving us strength to care for those around us even though, for some, we may be physically separated. Thank you for your presence in our world during this difficult time. Oh loving God, we feel your peace. Amen

4th Sunday of Easter

May 3rd, 2020



Until further notice

**To meet with Fr. Phil, Fr. Charlie or for Confession, please call to make an appointment – 386-6178
If no answer, please leave a message. We'll be checking messages regularly.**



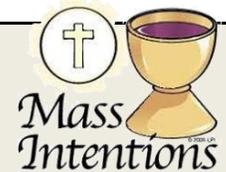
We pray for those who are sick and today, we hold in our hearts Bobby Lewis and Robin Purdy (cousins of Karen LeBlanc), Roy Pond (brother-in-law of Sharon McCormack), Kelly Campbell, Stancey Beck and Bill Morano.

We also pray for those who have died and today, we hold in our hearts those mourning the loss of Yvonne Daigle (sister-in-law of Evengéline Daigle), Gilbert Vienneau (brother of Blanche d'Entremont) and David Morrison (brother-in-law of Blanche d'Entremont).

Upcoming Liturgies for May 3rd and May 10th, 2020

St. Elizabeth of the Trinity

Sunday, May 3rd 10:00 a.m. Albertine Thibodeau – her husband, Joe Thibodeau
Sunday, May 10th 10:00 a.m. Wilfred Griffin (Anniv) – Anne and family



Prayer in the Midst of a Pandemic

The scriptures recall that after Jesus had healed a young man of a demon that made him convulse uncontrollably, the disciples asked him, "Why were we unable to drive it out?" Jesus answered, "This is the kind that can be driven out only by prayer (and fasting)" (Mark 9:29). Perhaps COVID-19 is one of those things that can be driven out only by prayer and fasting. We can be passive, waiting for a vaccine to be discovered, thinking that everything is out of our hands. Or as men and women of faith, we can take things into our hands through prayer and fasting. Perhaps a joyful fast (an Easter fast), rather than a penitential fast (a Lenten fast), is in order. We can all give up something, and we can all offer an extra prayer to not only align our efforts with front line workers and researchers, but also align our desire with God's great desire. Imagine, if everyone did one small act, the overall impact would be very great.



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE # 7

We continue the journey of living our faith amidst a pandemic. Provincial health officials are loosening, ever so slowly, some of the restrictions we have all been living under. Premier Higgs even suggested church services can resume outdoors albeit with cars spaced a safe distance apart. Bishop Vienneau is not moving in that direction, as we would still not be able to share in Communion and having a “drive-thru” Mass would trivialize the sacrament. I agree.



As we await the day when we can all gather together again to celebrate Eucharist, a word keeps emerging in me. It is the word “liminal” or “liminality.” Liminal comes from the Latin word *limen* which means “threshold.” (In the Middle Ages, a raised board was fixed on the ground in the middle of a doorway. Its purpose was to “hold” the “thresh” from moving from one room to another, thus, the “threshold.” Think of it as the board preventing the mudroom’s dirt from entering the living room).

You are in liminal space when you are on the brink of something, but you have not quite accomplished that something. The cocoon is a type of liminal space for the would-be butterfly which is neither a caterpillar nor a butterfly but something in between. To be in liminal space is to live in a betwixt and between state, where you have left one room but you have not yet entered another room; you have left your old job but have not started a new job; you have ended one relationship but have not quite embraced another. I find the expression “liminal space” is one of the best words to describe Church. We are icons of a Kingdom *already* here but *not yet* fully here. The Risen Lord is already in our midst and yet we eat this bread and drink this cup until He comes again. Or as St. Paul says, **“For now I see in a mirror dimly, and things come to me in a riddle, but some day I shall see face to face”** (1 Corinthians 13:12). He is talking about this already and not yet world that he lived in and that we are living in.

This is truly a space we can only inhabit with faith. People who live in a dualistic world, who cannot live with paradox and who have to have all the answers right here right now, tend to avoid liminal space and so truncate their own spiritual growth. **“In fact, when a Christian needs to ensure outcomes, you know they are outside the realm of faith. When we do not need to control the future, we are in a very creative and liminal space where God is most free to act in our lives. Faith seems to be the attitude that Jesus most praises in people, maybe because it makes hope and love possible.”** (Richard Rohr in *Jesus’ Plan For A New World*).

Liminal space is absolutely necessary for spiritual growth; it’s just not a space we move into readily or with any enthusiasm. Usually we about how you will get there, own. This time of the pandemic is a liminal space, a space none of us space my mind either wants to run or rush ahead to a time when this middle is the hardest place of all. liminal space. In fact, it’s the only



have to be taken there. Don’t worry though; life will take you there on its time when we are collectively living in would have chosen willingly. In this back to a time before the pandemic hit will be all over. Remaining in the Yet, all transformation happens in place where transformation happens.

Why do we resist going into liminal space? It is because living in that space, even for the shorts period of time, requires letting go, surrender and even submission. We may not consider ourselves control freaks, but relinquishing control is difficult for everyone. Liminal space is like a death before we are made into a “new creation” as St. Paul says. Our ego resists liminal space because our ego does not know that there is a resurrection on the other side. So, while our ego and our instincts try to prevent us from entering liminal space, this space, nevertheless, has much to teach us. It is transformative and well as Biblical.

The story of Jonah and the whale is a classic story of liminal space. Jonah was called by God to go to Nineveh (enemy territory), but instead, he went in the opposite direction by boarding a ship to Tarshish. After being thrown overboard, God arranged for a mighty whale to swallow Jonah. He remained in the belly of the whale for three days before being spit up close to Nineveh. Being in the belly of a whale and being led to a

place not of Jonah's choosing...talk about losing control! (At the last Men's Rite of Passage Retreat that four of us participated in, all the talks and rituals were done while the retreatants were inside an enclosure of 8-foot tall wooden "ribs"). Life itself has taken all of us into the belly of the whale.

Another classic story of liminal space come from the Book of Exodus. Under the leadership of Moses, God called the people away from the land of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. The 40 years of wandering in the desert was liminal space for the Hebrews. Many wanted to run back to Egypt while others kept asking Moses, "Are we there, yet?" Only Moses and a few others were convinced that this time in the desert was valuable time, a time when God was with them and transforming them.



Jesus himself enters liminal space many times in the gospels. In fact, the gospels tell us that **"Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the desert"** (Matthew 4:1). God saw the necessity of liminal space in his own Son's journey so much so that God's own Spirit drives Jesus into the desert. Jesus did not consciously lead himself to the desert, he had to be led there, just like we have to be led. But once there, he did not go back nor leapfrog ahead even though his days were fraught with such temptations to do so. Jesus believed that the liminal space of the desert was the only place where his own true transformation could happen. Can we also believe that God is fully present during these pandemic days? Could it be that we have been led here just as

Jesus was led into the desert? In liminal space you may not, necessarily, meet God, but you will meet the True Self, which is always a Divine encounter.

It takes courage to remain in liminal space and faith to believe, that while there, we are being formed for the better. Fr. Richard Rohr says it well in his book, Things Hidden, **"There is a necessary light that is only available through darkness, the darkness that comes in those liminal spaces of birth, death and suffering... There are certain truths that can be known only if we are sufficiently emptied, sufficiently ready, sufficiently confused or sufficiently destabilized."**

COVID-19 has done its share of emptying, confusing and destabilizing much in our lives. I have to believe that somehow God's Spirit is still in the middle of it all leading us ultimately to a deeper sense of ourselves and a truer sense of God.

Daily Readings for Week (May 4th – 10th, 2020)

Monday	Acts 11:1-18	John 10:11-18
Tuesday	Acts 11:19-26	John 10:22-30
Wednesday (St. François de Laval)	2 Timothy 4:1-5	John 10:11-16
Thursday	Acts 13:13-25	John 13:16-20
Friday	Acts 13:26-33	John 14:1-6
Saturday	Acts 13:44-52	John 14:7-14
Sunday (5 th Sunday of Easter)	Acts 6:1-7	1 Peter 2:4-9 John 14:1-12

Did you know?

Jesus knew his disciples: He called each one by name and he knew their hearts. He even knew who would betray Him. Our Lord is all loving and all forgiving, even when we make mistakes. Our hearts are readable to the Lord and He knows our hearts well. Think about Peter. Despite Peter's lies about not knowing Jesus, he became the rock of the Church! Tradition even refers to Peter as the first pope! We do not need to carry guilt forever or let it prevent us from fully serving God. The resurrected Lord and his forgiveness, wipes away our wrongdoings and brings us to new life!



Exploring Our Faith

YOU CAN DO IT!

Our faith, based on the gospel reading for this Sunday, tells us that God does not love the world in some big, bland, generic way. God's love is particular and concrete. Love that is not concrete is not love at all. Love is about this particular young man (not all men) whose addiction is costing our family dearly. Love considers this particular woman (not all women) who just became a widow. Love takes into account this particular guy, (not all guys) who right now is going through a mid-life crisis. Love is for this particular teenager (not all teenagers) who does not want to go to school today because she knows she will be bullied. God, can and does, love the whole world, while loving each of us in our uniqueness and particularity.

The good shepherd, the earthly image of our benevolent God, exercises a love for his sheep that is particular and concrete. It says, "**he calls his own sheep by name**" (John 10:3). There is something wonderful about being called by our name rather than just, "Hey, you." I think it has something to do with the fact that someone made an effort to see us less as a number and more as the unique person that we are. The first person to encounter the Lord Jesus after his resurrection was Mary Magdalene. However, she only realized he was not the gardener after he said her name, "**Mary!**" (John 20:16). Jesus was buried in a garden tomb. In the scriptures, gardens are not for growing cucumbers and radishes; gardens are for lovers (the archetype of the Lover). Love itself, Jesus, was calling the beloved, Mary. That is, by the way, how each of us will be summoned to eternal life at the end of our earthly lives—by our name.



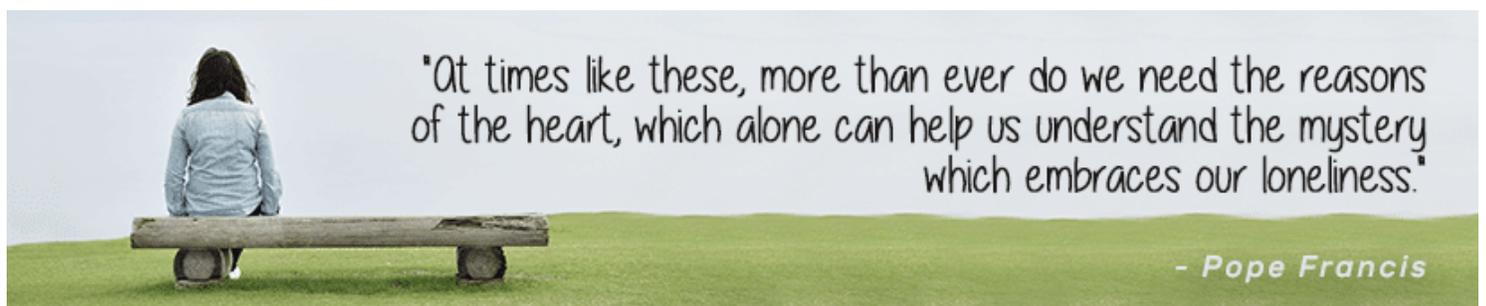
I think the Good Shepherd does more than just call us by name. Jesus also helps us, like a good teacher, to reach our potential. You who are or were school teachers know this. If a student had the potential to achieve a 75% average, and you, as the teacher, helped her/him to do that, you were acting as the Good Shepherd. You cared for each child and wanted each child to reach their potential. It was not about your reputation as a

teacher; it was about this particular child reaching his/her potential.

I heard Lou Holtz (the most successful coach in U.S. college football) say to us at a stewardship conference, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care." How true! Here is a little story from Fr. William Bausch about caring enough to help someone reach their potential: ***There was an old Navaho Indian sheep farmer whose neighbour's dogs were always killing his sheep. As he saw it, he had three options. One, in true American tradition, he could sue; he could bring a lawyer and take his neighbour to court. His second option was to build a stronger and higher fence so his neighbour's dogs could not get in. But he took a third option. He gave two lambs to his neighbour's children. In due time the lambs grew into sheep and had other sheep, and then the neighbour and his children got to see the sheep not as an impersonal herd, but as something warm and fuzzy, something personal with individual traits and a history and names. They soon penned in their dogs.***

The Navaho farmer believed in his neighbour's potential for self-control, compassion, decency, and fairness. It was always there, but it took another to bring it out. Good shepherds always move us forward with the words, "You can do it!"

Fr. Phil



"At times like these, more than ever do we need the reasons of the heart, which alone can help us understand the mystery which embraces our loneliness."

- Pope Francis

Going through this difficult time in our lives, our vocabulary can play havoc with our emotions. Here are two simple changes to that can help us look at our life and the world, a little more positively:

1. When we say, 'I worry that our son will wreck the car' or 'I worry that I may become sick', the 'I worry' is the beginning of a negative thought and when we are worrying, it's like praying for something that we don't want to happen! We need to replace the negative 'I worry' with the more positive 'I wonder'. How about, 'I wonder if the kids are late because they drove a friend home' or 'I wonder how the pandemic will change'. When we say, 'I wonder...' it gives us a chance to have a positive feeling before speaking.
2. When we say, 'What if I can't go visit my grandchildren' or 'What if I get sick', the 'What if' can conjure up negative feelings. You can replace the negative with something more positive though, like 'Even though'. How about 'Even though I can't see my grandchildren right now, I can write them special notes to tell them how much I love them.' or 'Even though this pandemic is scary, I can do my part by staying home.' When we say, 'Even though' it allows us to have a positive thought before speaking.



So, why not practice saying, 'I wonder' instead of 'I worry' and 'Even though' instead of 'What if'. Replacing the negative vocabulary allows us to focus on God's promise to always be with us. God will always walk with us and when we can no longer walk ourselves, it is then that He carries us.

Holy Ghost Church



Holy Ghost parishioners are still selling tickets (\$2 each or 3 for \$5) on a wonderful combination of gift cards worth \$300!! This fundraiser is especially important now and if anyone within our parish grouping would like to purchase tickets, please consider using e-transfer and Teresa O'Hara of Holy Ghost will put your name on the tickets. Others have already done this and it's working well! You can use the email teresa.ohara@ambulancenb.ca Thank you for your support!

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church



Knights of Columbus Council 9270 is offering 4 bursaries of \$500 each to all graduates who are children and grandchildren of fellow Knights. Application forms are at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, so if you want one, please call 386-6178 and we will place an application form in the mailbox for you to pick up. Same idea for when you want to drop it off. **Applications must be received no later than Monday, May 4th.**



And for all of you who have found new ways to give to the church – thank you! We have received donations by drop off, in the mail, e-transfers and online. All is most appreciated and gratefully received! Give Anne a call on Monday mornings if you would like to find out alternative ways to give to the life and work of the church. Again, thank you all.

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