

A Reflection from Fr. Joseph

Today’s gospel is filled with beauty and power. But it also contains within it a certain danger. If we were to misunderstand the words of Christ, that misunderstanding could lead to confusion and to harm. Take for example the beautiful image that Jesus gives us at the end of the gospel. He says, **“When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.”** Now when you and I hear of that phrase “being lifted up from the earth,” we probably imagine Jesus’ resurrection or his ascension, Jesus lifted up into the clouds. But this is not what the evangelist John has in mind. The last verse of the gospel makes this clear, for it says, **“He said this to indicate the type of death he was to die.”**

For John, Jesus being lifted up from the earth is Jesus being lifted up on the cross. This makes perfect sense historically, because crucifixion, in the ancient world, was a form of execution particularly designed to lift up the crucified one, so that his death could be displayed before everyone.

Now, clearly what Jesus is doing is associating his crucifixion with our salvation. We believe this. We frequently say that we are saved through the cross of Jesus. But here is where we need to be very careful. It is important for us to understand *how* we are saved through the cross of Jesus. What is it about Jesus’ crucifixion that saves us? We know that Jesus’ crucifixion was unjust, brutal, and horrible. We are safe to say that there is nothing about the injustice, the brutality, and the horror that saves us. All of these things were evil things. Had we been present during Jesus’ life, we should have taken every step we could to prevent Jesus - or anyone else for that matter—from experiencing such an unjust and horrible death. Therefore, we are not saved by the injustice or brutality of the cross. What we are saved by is the love and service of Christ who embraces the cross and the power of God that raises Jesus from the dead. It is the love of Christ and the power of God that saves us. And that love is stronger than the evil of the cross. In other words: There is nothing good in the cross itself. But good comes to us *through* the cross because what comes to us *through* the cross is the love of Christ and the power of God.

Now, why is this so important? It’s important because the pattern of Christ’s death and resurrection is a pattern that we find repeated over and over again in our own lives. It is important for us to get that pattern straight, to understand it correctly. Evil enters our life and it enters in many forms: in the death of a child, in a diagnosis of cancer, in the upheaval that addiction and divorce can cause within our families. When these things happen, they are evils in our lives and our faith does not ask us to pretend that they are not. To be a believer is not to say that we believe that these evils are somehow blessings in disguise. They are not. We should do everything to avoid such evils. And it compounds the error to imagine that God sends these evils into our lives. God does not give us evil so that later God can save us from it. We do not need a God like that. We do not believe in a God like that.

God does not send us evil. But when evil comes into our life, we do believe that God has the power to pull new life from that evil. Without making the evil thing good, we believe that God has the power to make good come from it. No matter how horrible a death we must face, God’s love is greater. No matter how heavy a cross we must bear, God’s power can lift us up. That is why Christians are always hopeful. Not because we believe that there is no evil, but because we believe that the love and power of God is greater than evil. God can bring us from evil to new life.

SHARE LENT - A 2nd collection will be taken up, this weekend, at all the Masses. The theme of this year’s campaign is “Reaping Our Rights.”

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

- Mon. Mar. 18th - Dan. 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-64; John 8:1-11
- Tue. Mar. 19th - ST. JOSEPH, Spouse of the Bl. Virgin Mary 2 Sam 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Rom. 4:13, 16-18, 22; Mat. 1:16, 18-21
- Wed. Mar. 20th - Dan 3:13-20, 24, 49-50, 91-95; John 8:31-42
- Thurs. Mar. 21st - Gen. 17:3-9; John 8:51-59
- Fri. Mar. 22nd - Jeremiah 20:7, 10-13; John 10:31-42
- Sat. Mar. 23rd - Ezekiel 37:21-28; John 11:45-46
- Sun. Mar. 24th - PALM SUNDAY
Is. 50:4-7; Phillip. 2:6-11; Mark 14:1-15:47



ALTAR SERVERS

- Wed. Mar. 20th - 7 :30 PM - Volunteers
- Fri. Mar. 22nd - 7:30 PM - Volunteers
- Sat. Mar. 23rd - 5:00 PM - A & A Taban, C & C Tang, J.Tuguinay.
- Sun. Mar. 24th - 9AM - Isaiah, Jonah & Norah Chao, S.Cheung, A & A Chan. 11AM - K & K Bui, N & N Sanchez, A & A Babas, W.Pham. 5PM - C & J Le, C.Akol, J.Roque, J.Paja, D.Dang, J.Cayabyab, Z.Bambilla.



PLEASE Altar Servers are reminded to please sign-up for the Easter schedule of Masses in the sacristy.

**EXTRA LENTEN SERVICES
JOIN US, FOR THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS,
ON FRIDAYS AT 7 PM, FOLLOWED BY MASS.**



SUCCESSFUL LENTEN MISSION

Our Mission was well attended, all 3 days of the Mission.

We are grateful to **Fr. Greg Bramlage**, of the Missionaries of the New Evangelization, of the Diocese of Tyler, Texas, for having come to preach our Mission and introduce us to a new understanding of God's Mercy and for sharing, with us, some incredible stories of healing that can occur when we repent of our sins, forgive those who've hurt us and pray with expectant faith.

A special thank you to all our parish groups and volunteers, especially our CWL for all their help, as well as to the sacristans and choirs.

Stewardship Reflection

"I will be their God and they shall be my people."

-Jeremiah 31:33

What does it mean to be God's people? It means we recognize that everything we have and everything we are belongs to God. We aren't "owners" of anything, we are merely "stewards" of the gifts God has given us. It means we are willing to use our gifts and our lives to care for our family, our neighbors and for people we don't know, just as God cares for each of us.

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NOVENA MASS - CHANGE IN MASS TIME

Please Note: That there will NOT be a Novena Mass on Wed. March 27th, as all the priests of our Diocese will be attending the Chrism Mass, at the Cathedral, at 5 pm. You are all invited to attend.

SCHOOL NEWS

- **Spring Break:** Our school re-opens on Mar. 25th.

LEGION OF MARY NEWS

Calling all active and auxiliary members, the 2024 ACIES will be held at Blessed Sacrament Parish (3040 Heather St. Vancouver), on Saturday, Mar. 23 at 9 am.

ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

Up-Coming Events

Days of Mercy 2024

Lent is a time to draw closer to God, to reflect on our lives, and to seek forgiveness and healing through the Sacrament of Confession.

Many parishes are extending their arms wider, offering additional times for Confession so everyone has the chance to experience God's mercy during Lent. These special times are in addition to the regular confession schedules of each parish.

Whether it's been a while since your last Confession or you frequent the sacrament regularly, know that Jesus is waiting for you with open arms. As Pope Francis once said: *"God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy."*

Rediscover the joy and peace that comes from reconciliation with God and with one another. For special Lenten Confession times, please visit rcav.org/confession

Canadian-American Young Adults Snowshoe at Mount Baker (Artist Point)

In the past, the young adults from the Archdiocese of Vancouver and the Seattle area (specifically from University of Washington) have come together for an annual American-Canadian snowshoe. This year, Frassati Young Adults from Seattle have invited us to join them to continue the tradition. Joining us will be Fr. Chrysostom, OP, and the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia. Weather permitting, Mass will be celebrated at the top. All young adults aged 18-35 are welcome! On Saturday, March 23, at Artist's Point on Mt. Baker in Deming, WA, United States. **Registration deadline: Tuesday, March 19.** Learn more and register at beholdvancouver.org/events

Weekend Getaway Marriage Conference

We are excited to partner with [FamilyLife Canada](http://FamilyLifeCanada.com) to offer weekend getaways to married couples in our Archdiocese!

The Weekend Getaway is a marriage conference uniquely designed to enrich your relationship. For most couples, it's a chance to reconnect, re-establish the foundation, and rekindle romance. For others, it's a fresh start. For some, it will be the weekend that saves a marriage. Wherever you're at in your relationship, this retreat is a weekend to remember.

The next getaway is on the weekend of April 5-7, 2024 at the Penticton Lakeside Resort. The fee is usually \$299. Use promo code RCAVPEN to register for \$199.

Accommodations at Penticton Lakeside Resort for conference participants should be booked separately. Rates may vary.

Registration deadline: Wednesday, April 3. For more information, please call Joyce at 604-683-0281 ext. 223 or visit beholdvancouver.org/events

Marriage Anniversary Mass 2024

"Love isn't easy. No. But the most beautiful thing that a man and a woman can give each other is true love, for a lifetime."

- Pope Francis

On Sunday, May 12, Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB will be honouring couples celebrating milestone marriage anniversaries: five-year increments from 5 to 60 years, and every year beyond 60 years. The Marriage Anniversary Mass will be at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Port Coquitlam at 1:30 p.m. Registrations received by Friday, April 19, will receive their certificate at the Mass. Learn more and register at family.rcav.org/mam