



The Messenger of Grace

April 2020

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Quo vadis?

You may remember that Latin question from one of the old “biblical” epic films from yesteryear we used to see often at Eastertime on TV starring Robert Taylor and Deborah Kerr. It was a story of Christian persecution in the reign of Nero. The phrase occurs several times in the old Latin edition of the Bible but in the film it comes from a legendary story involving Peter who encouraged by the community to flee the persecutions in Rome. On the road, Peter encounters Jesus coming in his direction. He asks him “Quo vadis?” [Where are you going?], to which Jesus replies “I’m going to Rome to be crucified again.” This encounter renews Peter’s courage and he returns to Rome to support the faithful, ultimately earning the martyrs crown himself.

Quo vadis? If any of us were asked this today, what might we say. One answer might be nowhere since we are told to stay at home as much as possible. Due to the health emergency, long-made plans have been cancelled, daily routines upended, schools shuttered, employments ended or altered, all sporting events, concerts, even political campaigning curtailed. More difficult still we have know way of knowing how long this will endure—when we will get going again.

In a phrase President Trump uses often this is something the like of which we’ve never seen before. Quarantine is not an unfamiliar word, though it brings a shudder. In itself it signals a present danger. For most of us it has been rarely heard, maybe a memory of Typhoid Mary, or perhaps it referring specific treatment rooms in a hospital, or perhaps a home where a particular where a highly contagious disease had been found. Perhaps in literature we may have read of the quarantine of a neighborhood or at most a town. The notion of a region let alone country falling under this word would have been beyond fiction. But here we are. Well effectively anyway. There is no strict confinement. Officials have been careful not to use the word, preferring the word isolation, when necessary.

As with the story from the Acts of Peter there is a question perennially asked by Christians when confronting danger, whether times of persecution or disease, whether it is right to flee. It was a question in the era of plague in the late middle ages. Luther himself wrote on it. More than once the University was decamped from Wittenberg because of plague. Though he sent his family away, Luther himself remained with one or two other clergy to see to those left behind and dying. Sometimes those evacuations were counter productive as the disease sometimes way brought to new places by the refugees. In our day we can recognize the error and futility of flight, our best solution at this time is ‘shelter in place’ or put another way taking refuge at home.

Despite all the serious disruption and uncertainty, a virtue shines forth because our home sheltering has a two-fold effect. It is not simply about running away or hiding to save ourselves, but to fight the spread of disease. It is a shared sacrifice. It falls on the health and ill alike. It isn’t about banishing the sick for our presence. In some ways, it is about sending the to the head of the line for treatment and care. It isn’t about being wary of our neighbors, it is being wary of disease. It isn’t being wary of death in the ultimate sense—Jesus death and resurrection assures us of death’s ultimate defeat. It is about guarding against unnecessary and untimely death. It may even be salutary as we continue our on-going national debate about healthcare, reminding us how much our lives are interdependent. Our health and well-being is only as secure as the health and well-being of our neighbors. As St. Paul re-

minds us, when one member of the body is ill, all suffer. This pandemic puts this truth into new perspective.

It is a lesson that I suspect will have application beyond the current circumstances when we are once again to reestablish daily life and work. Just as containing the biological virus became a shared responsibility, so the recovery from its effects will be a shared responsibility. The recent legislation offers us a moment to catch our breath and hopefully will help stabilize our economic life. We should be grateful to the assistance offered in its various plans, but we also should remember that what is ultimately offered in these government programs is our assistance to our neighbors. Some big, but necessary checks are being drawn on the future. It is another aspect of our sheltering in place. We have not fled now; we cannot flee in the weeks and months to come either. Quo vadis? Where are we going? We not going. We're staying. Like Peter, we're staying to meet what is to come with our community, our nation, our world.

Most appropriate in these days is this prayer from our hymnal:

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Rev. James G. Krauser, Pastor

	GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
	Telephone/Fax: (516) 785-5029 Parsonage: (516) 804-8837
	Preschool: (516) 409-5188
	Webpage: www.gracelutheranbellmore.org
	E-mail: gelcnb@aol.com

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This will be a necessarily brief newsletter as we cannot at this time schedule any events with certainty.

April Birthdays & Anniversaries

April 1st	Derek Novotny
April 2nd	Maria Azeez
April 3rd	Doris Maksimchak
April 5th	Eileen Callery, Michael McManus,
April 6th	Christopher Preattle
April 11th	Susan Horacek, Robert Spahn
April 12th	Marilynn Brunelle, Dawn Wickline
April 13th	Ruth & Bob Maraglio
April 14th	Adele Hofmann
April 17th	Colin Jenks, Terry Freyvogel
April 19th	Carli McAlinden
April 20th	Eric Hatt, Tara & Steven Steinmetz
April 21st	Thomas LaLena
April 24th	Eric Mehlhaff , Alisa Borger, Sophia Cianciulli, Megan Dies, Heidi McManus
April 25th	Taylor Mischke
April 26th	Madeline Maraglio
April 27th	John Maraglio , John Mumolo,
April 28th	Michael Maraglio , Zachary Weiss
April 29th	Frank Symanzik

Your Continued Support Is Important

There are probably few households in our congregation or community that have not seen reductions or cessation of income; we all pray for a restoration of our work schedules so that we can all earn our daily bread. We urge those who are able to forward your offerings as regularly as you can to the church office. Several have sent in contributions or dropped them in the mail slot. *We are grateful for your efforts.*

Holy Week & Easter

Although we might have hoped the suspension of public gatherings would have been over quickly, our fellow believers in the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches were correct in seeing that this situation would encompass Holy Week and Easter. Our own bishop has now alerted us that we should expect to remain unable to conduct public worship until at least the end of April.

Pastor has continued the posting of Sunday Sermons on Facebook, on the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church page and his own James Krauser page (either should be viewable by the non-Facebook members). Alternatively, a link to a video posted to Youtube with a few more elements of the service has been sent out via email. In addition, a video of the Evening Prayer liturgies originally schedule for Thursday evenings have been posted/emailed as well. We hope that you will find access to these while worship services are suspended.

At this time four videos are planned, for Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. The Easter video will be more complete than the previous Sunday videos. It will follow the order for Morning Prayer, similar to the mid-week services. A revised service order (bulletin) will be emailed with the Youtube link.

A livestream video is not contemplated at this time. The pre-recorded video should be available for viewing at our usual worship times on Sunday mornings or weekday evenings.



 LET'S BE **TOGETHER** ON EASTER SUNDAY 

MNYS Facebook Page & YouTube Channel Sunday, April 12 | 10:00 am

Easter is a time of **celebration** and **community faithfulness**. Let us be **TOGETHER** on this holy day, in prayer, in thought, and in our commemoration of Christ's resurrection.

Join Bishop Egensteiner as he leads us in **Easter worship** on **Sunday, April 12, at 10:00 am***.
The virtual front doors of MNYS are open to ALL!

We may be physically apart, but spiritually we remain TOGETHER. Let us pray!

**There was a discrepancy in the original flier as to the time of the worship, an email next week will confirm the time.*

Have you ever had an Easter tree?

For many years at our house we had an Easter tree. It wasn't very big, a table top size. It consisted of a couple of tree branches (painted white) in a vase. Pussy willow cane would be perfect (you wouldn't even have to paint them)! On it were hung variously colored and decorated eggs (these were blown out, then dyed and decorated). The eggs were hung with pipe cleaners, but yarn would do. Eggs could also be simply made by cutting egg shapes out of construction paper and decorating them with stickers that come in egg dye boxes or with snips of brightly colored wrapping or tissue paper. Plastic eggs could be used too. Use your imagination!

Once or twice in one of my churches went big. We cut down a young tree from the woods, painted it, and put white lights on it. People from the congregation provided eggs according to their own imagination, we also had gotten a supply of cross shaped book marks which we hung on the tree as well. Why should only Christmas get a tree! <JGK>

Something to consider

Please avoid grocery shopping on April 1-3 unless you have a critical need. Many WIC/SNAP benefits (food assistance programs) come to low-income families at the first of the month and there will be a surge as these families redeem them. Many of these families' benefits were depleted more quickly because children are staying home from school and some families are going hungry right now. Also, please respect their needs by not buying items with a WIC shelf tag unless you absolutely need them. They cannot simply substitute these items with others; they would go without.

Daily Devotions from the Catechism

THE MORNING/EVENING BLESSING

In the morning, as soon as you get out of bed [or in the evening, when you go to bed], you are to make the sign of the holy cross and say:

"God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit watch over me. Amen."

Then, kneeling or standing, say the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

THE CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he
will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

THE LORD'S PRAYER [OUR FATHER]

Our Father in heaven.
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial.
And deliver us from evil.
[For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever.] Amen.

If you wish, you may in addition recite this little prayer as well:

Morning:

"I give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have protected me through the night from all harm and danger. I ask that you would also protect me today from sin and all evil, so that my life and actions may please you. Into your hands I commend myself: my body, my soul, and all that is mine. Let your holy angel be with me, so that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen."

Evening:

"I give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected me today. I ask you to forgive me all my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously to protect me tonight. Into your hands I commend myself: my body, my soul, and all that is mine. Let your holy angel be with me, so that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen."

Morning: After singing a hymn perhaps or whatever else may serve your devotion, you are to go to your work joyfully.

Evening: Then you are to go to sleep quickly and cheerfully.

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