

Lent Devotional March 27, 2025

Scripture

Romans 5:12-21

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— 13 sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. 14 Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. 16 And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. 17 If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. 19 For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. 20 But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Devotion

The Rev. Paul Leone '90

Adjoining our home property in Baden is the convent and motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In caring for the 80 acres of land and facility, the Sisters “believe in a ‘sacramental universe’ of wondrous diversity—a gift that requires our care and respect. God entrusts these resources to us so that we may nurture and sustain them for our dear neighbors now and into the future.”

As “a dear neighbor,” I have the awesome freedom to walk and pray on this scared terra, to which the Sisters joyfully welcome all who come.

A pathway, marked with the stations of the cross, leads to the Sisters’ cemetery. Overlooking the multiple rows of grave sites stands a thirty-five foot crucifix, engraved with the words, “*Ego sum resurrectio et vita.*”

Whenever I pause beneath this graveyard crucifix, I pray aloud the words of Saint Paul: “For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore, all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.” 2 Corinthians 5:12-15

Anyone who has worshipped with the Sisters at Sunday morning Mass has experienced the gracious, inclusive welcome extended. The late Catholic priest, Henri Nouwen, has written words that call us to self-examination in this season of Lent:

“In the Eucharist, Jesus gives all. As God becomes fully present for us in Jesus, so Jesus becomes fully present to us in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Communion with Jesus means becoming like him.

With him we are nailed on the cross, with him we are laid in the tomb, with him we are raised up to accompany lost travelers on their journey. Communion, becoming Christ, leads us to a new realm of being.”

I believe, and so speak: this invitation is open and inclusive to all.

Prayer

“We do not presume to come to this your table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your abundant and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table; but you are the same Lord whose character is always to have mercy. Amen.”