

[Readings Ex. 24:3-8; Ps. 116; Heb. 9:11-15; Mark 14:12-16, 22-26:]

Two weeks ago, on Pentecost Sunday, 24,000 Catholic pilgrims began a 6,500-mile-long nation-wide pilgrimage that began from four points of our great country: north, south, east and west. The four pilgrimage lines will meet, form a cross, and intersect in July in Indianapolis, Indiana, the site of our nation-wide Eucharistic Congress. The last Congress held in our country was back in 1941, just before our entry into World War II.

On Pentecost Sunday, we also marked two years since the COVID-19 pandemic which forced a ban on public Masses for almost one year, was lifted and we were able to return to church for Sunday Mass.

I remember seeing tears in the eyes of folks coming up to receive Holy Communion for the first time in months! There were tears in MY eyes as well... There were certain protocols initiated that Sunday, some of which will change, and others will remain here at St. Martin de Porres.

You noticed that the blue painter's tape has been removed from the pews, so people can sit freely where they wish and maintain distance seating if desired. Wearing facemasks is now optional, even for our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. We will maintain Communion under one kind (no wine at Mass) because of the shortage of EMHC's and the fewer numbers of congregants wishing to receive the Precious Blood.

Sharing the Sign of Peace will continue to be optional, so that those who prefer not to, will not feel excluded. Currently, folks are sharing the Sign of Peace spontaneously and in a manner that both parties feel comfortable, so they are "at peace." That is great! Thank for your understanding and cooperation!

Speaking of the Eucharist, do all of you know who Carlo Acutis is?

The Vatican announced May 23 that Pope Francis had signed the decrees and that, he would convene a consistory to set a date for the canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis and six other people. Blessed Carlo Acutis was born and baptized in London to Italian parents in 1991, but the family moved back to Milan, Italy. Carlo was a Millennium baby!

After he started high school, he began to collect, create or design websites, including one for a local parish, for his Jesuit-run high school and for a Pontifical Academy. He also used his computer skills to create an online database of Eucharistic miracles around the world.

He volunteered at a church-run soup kitchen, helped the poor in his neighborhood, assisted children struggling with their homework, played saxophone, soccer and videogames, and loved making videos starring his dogs and cats. He used his own money to buy things for the poor. In other words, Carlo was an ordinary teenager who did extraordinary things. That is the definition of a saint!

When Carlo was only 7 years old, he wrote: "To always be close to Jesus, that's my life plan." His pastor allowed him to make his First Holy Communion one year ahead of his classmates, when he was in the First Grade because of his enthusiasm and devotion. Both to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Our Blessed Mother, praying the rosary every day. And especially the Most Holy Eucharist and tried to receive it at Mass every day. He wrote: "The Eucharist is the highway to heaven." "When people sit in the sun, they get a tan, but when they sit before the Eucharistic Jesus, they become saints." Their souls are tanned by the warmth of the love of Jesus!

When he was only 15 years old, Carlo was diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukemia and died on Oct. 12, 2006. He had said, "I'm happy to die because I've lived my life without wasting even a minute of it doing things that wouldn't have pleased God," according to his personal website: [carloacutis.com](http://carloacutis.com).

He was buried in Assisi, Italy wearing Nike sneakers, black jeans and an athletic warmup jacket -- clothes he was used to wearing every day. His feast day is October 12, the anniversary of his earthly death.

The two miracles attributed to the intercession of the teen involved alleged miraculous recoveries for a young boy in Brazil in 2013 and a young woman in Florence in 2022. A third miracle, the healing of a woman from Costa Rica, was attributed to his intercession, On May 23, just two weeks ago, Pope Francis recognized this third miracle, which paves the way for Blessed Carlo's canonization. He would be the Church's first "Millennium Saint."

Finally, I would like to encourage all of you to attend a special viewing this week Tuesday or Wednesday of a movie at the MJR Theater, located at 35400 Van Dyke in Sterling Heights. The movie is called "Jesus Thirsts: The Miracle of the Eucharist," and it will inspire you and deepen your love of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Jesus thirsts for US as much as we thirst for HIM! The movie will be shown This Tuesday and Wednesday at 4 PM and 7 PM at the MJR Theater. This is another way to continue our participation in our National Eucharistic Revival.

What does the Eucharist mean to you? Ask yourselves these many questions:

- DO I TRULY BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS ACTUALLY PRESENT IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST? IF I DO, DOES MY BEHAVIOR REFLECT THAT?
- AM I ON TIME FOR MASS? DO I ACKNOWLEDGE HIS PRESENCE IN THE TABERNACLE WHEN ENTERING THE CHURCH WITH PRAYERFUL SILENCE, TO BOW OR GENUFLECT BEFORE ENTERING MY PEW?
- IS THE WAY I DRESS, SIT, STAND AND KNEEL SPEAK OF THE REVERENCE I HAVE FOR HIM?
- WHEN MASS BEGINS, DO I LISTEN CAREFULLY TO HIS PRESENCE IN THE LITURGY OF THE WORD AND HOMILY?
- IF I AM LATE IN ARRIVING FOR MASS, OR RETURN FROM GOING TO THE REST ROOM, DO I WAIT IN THE BACK OF CHURCH UNTIL EVERYONE IS STANDING BEFORE GOING TO BE SEATED IN MY PEW?
- DO I PREPARE MYSELF SPIRITUALLY BEFORE RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION IN PRAYER OR DO I STAND IN LINE WAITING AS I WOULD FOR ANYTHING ELSE?
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, DO I REALIZE THAT AS I RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION, JESUS. REALLY. ENTERS. ME?

On today's Feast, Pope Francis says this: "Let us be in Communion with our brothers and sisters who do not have the freedom to express their faith, and with those who have been asked to sacrifice their lives for fidelity to Christ. Let us feel united with them, sing with them, praise them, and love them. May their body and blood, together with that of the Lord, be a pledge of peace and reconciliation for the whole world." AMEN!

[Readings: Genesis 3:9-15; Ps. 130; 2 Cor. 4:13 – 5:1; Mark 3:20-35]

If you spend a lot of time watching the news today, you'll learn the same thing Genesis warns about. That there's trouble in Paradise. Things aren't as they should be, and someone (or lots of someones) will pay a bitter price.

So, what does this trouble look like? In the original story in our First Reading, God calls, and Adam hides. We're not surprised by this early game of Hide-and-Go-Seek. Because you and I are familiar with the dynamics of a decaying relationship. When we're in the wrong, you and I become notoriously hard to find. We hide when we're ashamed of what we've done or failed to do. We become invisible when we have secrets we have no intention of sharing. And we go AWOL (Away without Legal Permission) when we're afraid of being found out.

And we may do all this while remaining in plain view. Adam ducked behind a bush. But you and I often hide behind words: what we say or withhold. We wear disguises: a false smile, a cold silence, even a smokescreen of relentless chatter that keeps everyone away from the truth we're protecting. All the while, we may be seething with resentment, covering a gaping wound, or wracked with fears we dare not express out loud. We don't want anyone to see how vulnerable we are. Or, like Adam, we're not going to expose our private selves in public.

That's Part I of the trouble: Unpleasant truths get put under wraps.

Part II of the trouble is the opposite, as Saint Paul describes it in our Second Reading: GOOD news may remain unseen. What we CAN see is often overwhelming: war zones, too many school shootings, epidemics, yet another leader proving to have clay feet. Not long ago I got a panicked email from a friend about an *E. coli* outbreak: *Don't eat the lettuce! Throw it out, now!* I was eating a pre-sliced melon at the time, then I saw the news! It's a tough world when you have to fear your own food! I was eating heart-smart at the time, and it could have killed me! So, back to White Castle!

Paul encourages us not to limit reality to what we can see and can touch, but to make room for the unseen -- which has the advantage of being eternal. Media assures us daily we're one step from the apocalypse. The end of the world is near!

Take a hint from the Bible: Every generation is apocalyptic. Your own apocalypse will happen the day you die and stand before Jesus Christ on Your particular Judgement Day!

In today's Gospel, Jesus is poised on the brink, with accusations all around. His family thinks He's crazy. Enemies call Him possessed. How does Jesus recover from all of this? He roots Himself in His Father's love, in abundant life, with a new family composed of spirit and truth. We can trust the trouble, or trust the Lord. God is always calling. We can choose to hide or choose to come forth. A psychologist explained something fascinating about shame: No one can put it inside us without our consent. Shame doesn't enter from the outside but responds from the inside.

Guilt says I did something wrong; shame says I am evil.

Those seeking to embarrass us are frustrated if we refuse their attempt to impart shame with the slap of a hand or a word. If we accept shame, it's because deep down we're already carrying it.

So Adam, guilty of disloyalty to God, is shamed by his newfound nakedness. Yet Jesus, insulted, beaten, stripped, and humiliated, remains clothed in honor at the cross. Got shame? We've got a sacrament for that. It's called Confession, Penance, and Reconciliation.

Two other points about today's Gospel which strike up a spirited discussion. What exactly is that "unforgivable sin" that Jesus speaks about? And, more importantly, did I commit it? Right? Am I going straight to Hell when I die because I have already committed that "unforgiveable sin?"

There are two schools of thought about this. The first understanding is the more popular one. It says that whatever sin I committed, it is so awful, so terrible, so horrifying, that God could never forgive me of it. Do you know what's wrong with this way of thinking? It puts the power of our most horrible sin ABOVE God's power to forgive. That is untrue and unnatural. It is not of God.

The second understanding is that when we die, one visionary says that our soul will stand before Jesus Christ Who will ask us not once, but twice: "Will you truly repent of your sins and accept Me and My love? Will you accept My forgiveness and eternal friendship?"

The visionary, and our Catechism of the Catholic Church say, if we decline that invitation, if even after the moment of death – we still have free will -- we still reject Jesus Christ; we condemn ourselves to

eternal damnation. Failure to repent, and failure to trust in God's forgiving love for us when we die is the "unforgiveable sin."

My final observation is the reference in the Gospel to the "brothers and sisters of Jesus." This was discussed as part of our prayer experience at a recent gathering of friends. Before I could even explain the concept, the most senior member of our group shouted, "I know, I know! They were not His biological brothers and sisters; they were His extended family." But more important than that is what he said next: Jesus Christ says, "YOU are my mother and my brother and my sister if you do the will of Our Father."

So, this week, practice loving without conditions. Practice dealing with your guilt and shame. Practice believing in the all-powerful forgiving love of God. Practice walking with Mary. What better ally do we have than Mary, the Mother of God? Now THAT is someone whose opinion of us we should care about! Spoiler alert: Mary is very fond of each and every one of us, and stands ready to intercede for us. AMEN!



[Readings: Ezekiel 17:22-24; Psalm 92; 2 Cor. 5:6-10; Mark 4:26-34]

Recently, I came upon this reflection from Father Jonathan D. Kalisch, OP Director of Chaplains and Spiritual Development for the Knights of Columbus. I share this with you as we honor all men – especially fathers -- on this Father’s Day weekend.

Every man -- even those who don’t have children of their own -- is called to fatherhood. His fatherhood consists of nurturing the vocations of those for whom the Lord has given him care and responsibility. A father plays a key role in showing his children the love of God the Father, through which they experience, on a supernatural level, the knowledge of the unrepeatability of their own unique lives.

The opposite is also true. If a father abuses, ridicules or molests his children, they grow up unable to relate to God as Father. If this is impossible for you, too, I suggest you get to the Father through the “Back Door” -- go to Mother Mary, or your Brother Jesus and ask them to get you in, and to heal, and to be reconciled.

Before a man is ever a spouse or a father, he himself is first a beloved son of God the Father. How we label ourselves is secondary/ Knowing that he is a beloved son of the Eternal Father gives a man ordered priority to his life and relationships: first God, then his spouse and, finally, his children. Pope Francis reminds us that God’s unique plan for each of us “has to do with the meaning of my life before the Father Who knows and loves me, with the real purpose of my life, which nobody knows better than He.”

Today, men, in their role as husbands and fathers, are often portrayed in the media as stupid, insensitive to their wives, and the worst possible role model for their children. These and other factors tend to make men feel powerless and weak.

But more plentiful is the positive image of ordinary, hardworking men who are faithful to God, faithful to the Church, Faithful to their wives, and faithful to their families and friends. Thank you to those men in this parish who are such men. Thank you for your witness.

Within the Church, as well, it is not as easy as it once was for men and boys to find living examples of what it means to be a “man of God.” Does man’s God-given mission differ from woman’s, and if so, how? Are there any role models men can turn to in order to learn how to become the men their Father in heaven calls them to be? How can men today arm and defend themselves against the cultural phenomena that are weakening their identity and diverting them from their God-given tasks? The national web site of the Knights of Columbus has many resources and reference at [kofc.org](http://kofc.org).

That’s Knights of Columbus ([kofc.org](http://kofc.org)), NOT Kentucky Fried Chicken ([kfc.org](http://kfc.org))!

Michael Brown, a reporter and journalist, a husband and father, writes this: Working through my wife and our five foster children -- indeed, in every facet of my life -- God continues to model for me what it means to be a good parent. Briefly, the greatest gift I have to do this is my faith.

I’ve done nothing to earn it and have tried repeatedly and mightily to ignore it. But my call, my vocation, is to love my wife and five kids and to provide a safe and loving home for them. This stability

has had an amazing effect on our five kids. They will attend the same school or day care year after year. Most important, is that our home is their permanent home for as long as they live.

Faith has driven me in this journey. The “Fab Five” -- as my wife and I call our kids -- have grown to understand that when bad things happen to them, they can always, “come back home,” as WE come back home when we have sinned. That’s that inner assurance we want to continue to build in our kids, who have suffered immeasurably from the real consequences of being abandoned.

Father’s Day is a great recognition, and I have a drawer full of Greatest Dad and Greatest Grandpa T-shirts. My reality is that being a dad isn’t the ability to procreate. It’s not about working 16-hour days or climbing a ladder to be able to provide more for my family. The privilege of being a dad comes with a much deeper calling.

My faith sees the presence of God in my life. I see God as the garden master in my yard. I see God as the perfect teacher in my classes. I see God as the divine editor who made all my stories just a little bit better. I see God as the loving Parent -- the One who cares about me and cares for me no matter how often I screw up or whatever “impossible” challenge I face.

There’s no instruction manual to being the perfect dad.

It’s a foundation of listening with an open heart. It’s built with love and patience and capped with a prayer at the end of the day to the Parent of us all. God continues to model for me what it means to be a good parent. And I, using strength beyond my means, find a way to not totally screw it up. Thank you, Michael Brown!

Our readings today speak of planting seeds, protecting the crops and carefully yielding the harvest. What we say and what we do are like seeds planted in the hearts and minds and spirits of our children. Jesus makes it very clear that often times it's the smallest things which make the biggest difference in our faith. The same can be said about parenting.

They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Your children will not only imitate you, but in many ways, they will grow up to be like you simply because you're their parents. And what they see you do is their "normal." I cannot tell you how many times growing up as a kid and as a teen, my mom would look at me and say in frustration: "You're just like your FATHER!" Or, because I looked like my Mom, my Dad would say, "Don't look at me with your mother's eyes!"

By the way, did you know that because Jesus was not conceived by a biological man, Jesus has only one set of DNA in His blood? So, He looks just like His Mother!

My friends, we walk by faith and not by sight. Let us please our Heavenly Father whether we are at home or away, so that when WE stand before His judgment seat, we may receive our recompense for our good parenting and not our bad. AMEN!

[Job 38:1, 8-11; Psalm 107; 2 Cor 5:14-17; Mark 4:35-41]

If you really get into today's readings, you see that they form a biblical dramedy – a dramatic comedy or a comedic drama. To set the scene for today's First Reading, you have to know the story of Job. He is a good and holy man. A successful businessman. A devoted husband and father. Lives in the biggest house in the neighborhood. And one by one, each of those blessings is taken away from him. His house burns down. His business goes belly-up. His wife and children are stricken down with illness, disease and eventually, death. Job himself becomes covered with sores. He loses it all.

Then Job asks the questions which some of you and I maybe ask once a month, once a week, once a day, especially when there are major or minor problems going on in our lives. "God, why are You doing this? God, do You have any idea what You are doing? Job dares to confront and to challenge God. He doesn't doubt God, or doubt his faith. He needs the assurance that God is still in control.

So God rolls up His sleeves, takes a deep breath and responds with a few questions of His own: "OK. You wanna do this? Fine. Where were you when I made all of creation? Were you around? Were YOU my advisor?" If we were to read all the verses of God's ranting and raving, it would be some 129 verses! It would take me another hour to read all those verses! And I imagine Job shrinking more and more with each verse! At the end of GOD'S ranting and raving, Job has nothing to say to God but to re-affirm his faith in God.

"I KNOW that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be hindered. I have had to deal with great things that I do not understand. I had heard of You by word of mouth, but now my eyes has seen You. I'm sorry for what I said and I repent; truly, totally, completely."

Those words come from Ch. 42, verses 2-6. But a more famous quote comes from Ch. 19, verses 23-26: "Oh, would that my words were inscribed in stone... I know that my Redeemer lives! And from my flesh, I shall see God!"

It is not a sin to question God's purposes, God's "Will," but it is a grace to accept them. Do you really believe that your Redeemer lives, and that He is truly in control?

In our Second Reading, St. Paul reminds us that IF we really believe that our Redeemer lives, IF we choose to live in the love of Christ, measuring all of our thoughts, words and actions according to the will of Jesus Christ and not our own, then we ARE going to see life with a new set of eyes.

"The old things have passed away; behold, new things have come."

This is a common penance that I give to folks who confess that they are being too judgmental, too prejudicial or too discriminatory of others: I tell them to say this prayer: "Lord, help me to see them with YOUR eyes." Repeat this with me: "Lord, help me to see them with Your eyes."

So, if we are tempted sometimes to lash out at God, we are also called to reach out our hands, our hearts and minds to Him. When St. Paul wrote his Second Letter to the Corinthians, he had already experienced three shipwrecks! I think when other ship captains found out about this, St. Paul was not seen as a "preferred passenger!" Paul calls us to a new and deeper world-view; a new way of seeing, a deeper insight into human life.

With this, we can judge the events of our lives, so that it is not merely a human response, but one made in faith, hope and trust.

In today's Gospel, when Jesus and the Apostles are caught in a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee, the Apostles are convinced that they are going to die. They are frightened out of their wits, as most of us would be in similar circumstances. But they are even more upset that Jesus is not concerned – in fact, He is sound asleep! There is both desperation and accusation in their voices as they ask Jesus if He even cares that they are doomed.

I have had at least three near-drowning experiences.

The first was when my three siblings and I were in grade school. We went to visit my Aunt Dorothy at her cottage on Cass Lake. When we kids got onto the pier, my brother snuck up behind me and with both hands, pushed me into the

water. If I didn't know how to swim well, I certainly learned THAT day!

The second experience happened when I was in high school. My family was visiting with a family in Algonac on Anchor Bay.

While my older brother, twin sister and I went swimming, we found an old, abandoned door floating nearby. All three of us got on the door and played Pirates. Which proves my theory about the movie Titanic: There WAS enough room on that abandoned door for both Jack Dawson AND Rose! Jack didn't have to die! So there!

Anyways, we drifted out into deeper water, and Dave and Pat abandoned ship, while I sailed on, waving my imaginary sword in the air. Then I got scared and fell off the door. I didn't know that the water at that point was thirty feet deep! I waved my arms and screamed out for help. My folks and friends thought I was waving at them, so they waved back! My friend's 19-year-old son realized I was in distress, and so he jumped in and rescued me.

My third experience happened when I was a young priest in Marine City. A female parishioner, her nephew and I decided to go "tubing" on the St. Clair River from Marine City to Algonac. We each had an oversized, inflated inner tube. It was a warm, sunny, summery Sunday afternoon, and the three of us floated downstream, we fell asleep. Until we heard the deep sound of a freighter. The three of us had floated into the freighter channel on the St. Clair River! The river was flowing north to south. The other two stayed in their inner tubes and managed to paddle their way east to west to get to the shore. Because I didn't want to lose MY inner tube, I got off of it, held it with one arm, and paddled. I was within 50 feet of the shore and lost my wind. My arm slowly slid down the inner tube. I began praying over and over the words of Job: "I know that my Redeemer lives!" Somehow, I got my second wind from the Holy Spirit!

By the grace of God, I made it to shore, and collapsed from exhaustion.

After Mass, when I was greeting people, more than one person said to me, "Stay out of the water!"

After Jesus calms the storm, the wind and the water, the question the

Apostles ask at the end of today's Gospel is a loaded question: "Who, then, is this?" is a faith statement about Jesus. It is clear that He has the same powers as God Himself. His call to greater faith does not mean that they themselves will be able to still the wind and the waves.

He is making it very clear that real faith means believing that God is not absent, cold or uncaring. That whatever happens to us, God is present and working on our behalf. Bad things happen to good people. We experience personal disappointment, failure and tragedy. It is in these moments that we pray to accept what God has to offer us – not just "His Will," but strength, consolation and hope.

The real miracle here is not the calming of the sea, but the realization that even if Jesus Christ does not calm all the storms in our lives, He always walks through them, always right next to us!

How do YOU handle your storms in your life? Have YOU ever asked, "Lord, don't you care that I am perishing?" How does Jesus answer YOU? Maybe He borrows these words from Psalm 46: "Be still and know that I am God," words which are reminiscent of Jesus' command to the wind and sea – and to us -- in today's Gospel: "Quiet! Be still." AMEN!



[Wis. 1:13-15; 2:23-24; Ps. 30; 2 Cor. 8:7, 9, 13-15; Mark 5:21-43]

Most people will go to any lengths to avoid talking about or thinking about death. We fear and dread it, and when it comes for us or for those close to us, we are angry and even more fearful. But as the old expression goes: the mortality rate in life is 100%.

What does God say about death? Our First Reading says “God did not make death” – an odd statement, given that all things must die. God says through the inspired author of the Book of Wisdom that all creation is good. That God takes no delight in death and destruction, and that these are never God’s intentions.

So... If God made everything good, why doesn’t God just “fix” everything? The “death” spoken of here is the unnatural and avoidable kind: war, violence, starvation, disease and injustice. This “envy of the devil” is coupled with HUMAN actions rather than the reaction of a vengeful God. In these situations, it’s not up to GOD to make things right -- you and I are the ones to make things right. It’s up to us to “fix” things that can be avoided or reconciled.

When we fail to bring peace, fellowship, nourishment, health and justice, it is unfair to get angry with and to blame God. Natural biological death is not a punishment but an essential element of creation. And death, when it is understood as separation from God, is met with God’s response: the gift of eternal life.

Jesus Christ, Who died an unnatural and violent death, is the promise of a new life, an eternal life without sorrow or pain. The power of God to do this is limited only by our own faith.

In almost all of the Gospel healings, Jesus declares that it is the faith of the individual that makes the healing possible. It seems that God can exert a positive, active healing power on our behalf, but it must be met by an open and receptive power that only we possess.

God intends for us to have life and to have it abundantly. God does not afflict us with death and disease as some sort of punishment or test. Life will deal out many painful situations, but only you and I can decide how we will respond to them. Especially when it ends in illness or in death.

While we are meeting our needs and the needs of others, doesn't it seem that the task is constantly interrupted? Life is an endless series of interruptions. If you're not being interrupted, you're not living. One bishop defined the interruptions of his day as the "real work" that God sends his way for him to do!

Jesus would agree. During His Galilean ministry, He escapes one mob only by taking to the sea. Docking on the far shore, He encounters another crowd. He is on his way to heal a young girl, and an older woman interrupts His journey. Death sometimes interrupts our life journey. This has happened to me a few times in my life.

I remember seven years ago, all the prayers that you and I offered for my sister Kathy's healing and cure from cancer. When that didn't happen, I had problems with my faith and my prayer life. Until I realized that I was praying for what I wanted, not praying to accept what GOD wanted and what GOD had planned for Kathy.

When it was close to the end of her life on earth, I asked Kathy if she was ready for her transition. She said, "Yes. And it will be quick and peaceful." And it was. Two days later. So it was also eight

months ago, when my best friend of 37 years, Fr. Jim Bjorum died suddenly and was buried on what would have been his 76<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Only nobody knew his death would also be quick and peaceful... and unexpected. My prayers to accept God's will in this situation has taken a longer time to process. I'm still working on it!

With whom do you most identify in today's Gospel? There are plenty of characters here who are being stung by death. There is a woman whose whole life has been caught and dominated by a terrible, life-demanding illness. There is a distraught father. A little girl whose young life is being cut short. There are the baffled disciples, the crowd who doesn't know what to think of all this. Where are you?

This week, pray this Gospel, assuming the role of each of the characters mentioned in this particular Gospel passage.

And yet, intruding into the story – another interruption -- is another face, another character -- the strong, life-giving face of Jesus. Mark says that Jesus was forever intruding into fixed, settled, hopeless situations -- and bringing life. Hear His strong voice speaking over the laments and dirges in today's Gospel. Hear Him as he calls to the little girl, "Get up!" I think He may be calling to you and me. "Get up!" His voice is strong, commanding, and vital. "Get up!" Now hear His voice, that strong, shattering, enlivening voice.

A voice evoking "fear and trembling" (verse 33) in all who heard it that day. We pray that we may hear that voice today, so that it may do the same for us. Life is frightening, when it intrudes into the realm of death. Death is the final interruption in our earthly lives!

Hear His voice now. I think He is shouting. There is so much death. We are asleep with death so it takes a loud voice to wake us.

Negativity, fear and doubt have to give way to faith, trust and hope. We who have much of this do not need more. But perhaps our call today is to be a positive witness to those who have less. To "pay" it forward, or better still, to "pray" it forward! St. Paul is not calling us to some socialistic commune in today's Second Reading. He is asking us to meet everyone's needs equally.

Death is chaotic. Jesus Christ has come into the world to deal with the chaos of death. Jairus rejoices; the old woman tells the whole truth.

What is the whole truth? Surely, the Way, the Truth and the Life could order her chaos. In this fallen world, in this world suffering from sin and death, there's plenty of chaos. Jesus came into the world to deal with death and chaos.

And we Christians are meant to share this fact with the world. We are to go to the ends of the world, as joyful, missionary disciples, announcing the Good News that chaos will not win. Against all odds, in contrast to all our evidence to the contrary, God will bring order to all this chaos. And the Good News is that we can help Him! AMEN!