



The Benedictine Tide

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Touching Lives through Prayer and Service

Spring 2020

I'll Say It Again: God Will Win The Day!

Writer's suggestion: read aloud with expression –
or in a voiced whisper, if you like

We grew up together, this Jesus and me
Our moms met at the village well everyday
We played nearby until Aba Joe whistled
He had a chore for us.

True, my friend was older, he had a head start
2000 years and some
But, we were BFF from the start
He, always the leader; I, the tag-a-long

So, to answer your question:
Yes, I was there today – I saw it all
(almost all, at times I hid my eyes in horror)
It's over now (or is it?)

I turn to leave the hill... I spot you -
Won't you come with me –
Walk the deserted streets
Our footsteps whisper-soft upon the pavement
As we scurry. past doors –
All around us, bolted tight; windows shuttered, too
Against who? Or what? And, why?

*Time warp: What is this thing called COVID?
Some are blasé; others the end is near
For my part, I say: God will win the day!*

Now, I am alert in my distracted state
What was Mary feeling – could she feel at all?
They said "avoid the crowds"
But I HAVE to see her; I have to find Mary!

In my mind's eye I see her
Picture of calm acceptance
Tenderly cradling the body of
her only son

Was she recalling how He'd
raised the widow's son
And Jairus' 12-year old
He'd beckoned Lazarus from the grave
So, why does He lie inert, dead-weight in her arms?



He'd told her once, with tears in His eyes,
He would leave her one day
[She'd thought for work or
maybe family]
He couldn't say when or how
... but it was true
She'd outlive her only son

You? I see you standing there,
Wondering which way to go
The churches and temples are
closed and barred
So, come with me; Let's go to
Mary.

[She always knows what to do.]

I saw her go in here
Lift the latch and open the heavy door.
The door creaks closed behind us,
Shadows stop dancing to stand stock-still
in the dim light
[Oh, glory be - There's no hand rail!]

Cautiously we climb:
Skirts in one hand; the other grasping precious oil
Up one step [pause, LISTEN] ... What's that sound?
Ah - gentle breaths; an occasional snore
Step up, up step by step
(Dear Jehovah, don't let me trip.)

How many are up there? Who's with Mary
Huddled, close to their best friend's mom?
Ah, I see the ones I knew would be here
(Save one – what is he up to now?)

A shuffle as these boys I'd seen
Grow to men in the past three years
Make space for me ... and thee
[And any who be followers of Mary's son]
Squeeze in here; settle back
Melt into the comfort of a hug, a squeeze
of home-grown family intimacy



God Will Win the Day (Con't. from Page 1)



Thomas, they told us,
had gone to take a look-around
Find some bread, a little wine
So we could repeat the custom
He'd begun: break the bread
Pass the never-empty cup –
Til all know a deep found peace.

Now we wait ... and wait
And wait some more
We left Him - in that tomb
Donated for his rest;
Wrapped in linen, oil and spice
At the opening, stern soldier-guards.

The earth had danced in quakes
Unlike any we'd ever felt
The sun gone dark
Phantoms of folks long gone
Gently brushed away our tears

Something strange
Unusual, curious is happening
But, let's follow Mary's cue -
And WAIT
Something tells her
He's not finished yet
She doesn't know (we don't know)
(Maybe he told John, his bosom bud)

We'll just WAIT
When the sun comes up (and it WILL)
In a day or two ... or maybe, three
The rest of the story is yet to unfold ...
I'll say it again:
God WILL win the day!

Sister Roberta Bailey

Messages by other Sisters:

The human touch, most basic of needs, now denied is replaced by distance. Anguish and grief, most dreaded emotions, now clutch the human heart worldwide. To be or not to be, so many questions—to live or not to live, to die or not to die, to live in fear paralyzed by sadness or not, to live in a nation this Easter day with more Covid-19 deaths than anywhere.



A coffee mug on our shelf reads: BELIEVE. Outside, more helicopters go southward toward Tampa transporting the ill. Breathe a prayer for the pilot and occupants. Believe. Live in faith tinged with darkness and light, with absence and Presence.

Believe

The usual joy of a visitor to the greenhouse garden is no more, while Creation still continues to feed us. Gifts of nature console. A Bird of Paradise flower grows by the door. There are distant calls, the familiar sound of osprey circling high overhead, and if one can focus, several come into view. Now, the peaceful solitude of farming gives rise to our stronger universal intensified prayer for and with the whole human family. Believe. Focus.



Believe

Focus

Take every precaution--protection, exercise, pray, feed the soul and body. Life on Holy Name's farm is holy, a gift and physical respite from sad news, a miracle of growth, a work with our Creator to stay alive with the loving living Christ. We know that for a seed to germinate, it must have essential elements—light, moisture, air. Given its basic needs, it develops and matures into nutritious plants that we consume at table, and thus we actually are eating sunshine, air and water. Yet, for all who lack life's basic needs, we mourn.

A daily expectation in the greenhouse is to always be alert for something to occur or someone to come. Deep in our collective souls, through this global crisis, we expect Christ to someday come again. Do we all live in continual anticipation that He will arrive in glory when

we least expect? We experience death. Jesus experienced excruciating suffering, death and continues doing so in humanity now. Jesus destroyed death that Easter day, is eternally alive. And God will wipe away all tears. Believe in the promise won by Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Believe. Focus. Live in the Divine Light. And may eternal light shine upon all the departed.

Sister Miriam Cosgrove



To be honest like all of us, I never would have dreamed of something like Covid 19 happening to our world, especially at the peak of Holy Week.

Lent this year has been very different to be sure. But not to have a full Holy Week of services as we

know and love is extraordinarily difficult. My heart goes out to people across the world who are without any semblance of a traditional service and cannot receive Holy communion.

But this is not a punishment from God for something we did or did not do. This is an act of nature like any great storm or flood. I consider this time as a test of faith and hope. We need to put our trust in God and know that some good will come from this. God has not left us.

I quote: "And the world came together as the people stayed apart." It is an inspiration to see so many working together to help us all get through this very different time in our history.

"Stay home, lock your doors! Hide yourselves for a little while until this trial has passed." (Adapted from Isaiah 26:20) "Go into your room. Close the door and pray." (Matthew 6:5)

Sister Donna Dewitt



At this time of pandemic, we're all called to deeper faith. We've just got to admit that "we are not in charge." All can be victims of illness, pain...death. The

whole world and all people are at risk— in the darkness, see the light—it won't be forever night.

Jesus comes amid the pandemic, caused by the lack of care for the earth, others and even our self. We've taken for granted the gifts of health, food, freedom to come and go while not protecting these rights for others.

With/In/Through us

We are not alone. Jesus walks "WIT" us.

With those suffering those infected/affected with Covid 19; with us in "lock down."

In us as we try to make the best of this time and see God suffering with/in us and working

Through us whenever we believe, reach out, care/share to aid others; connecting from a distance with others by phone, email, snail-mail...ZOOM; to share wisdom we learn from this time by listening "with the ear of the heart."

Though separated, we are together. Let us be one in Christ. Quarantined, let us grow through prayer, reflection, writing, sharing with others. Look for the good—it is there too. This unplanned and elongated Lent—like the tree in Spring after the dead of winter, we believe, will bear fruit and we'll see the Son rise. Be wise—He's "WIT" us.

Sister Mary David Hydro

Let Us Fix our Eyes on Jesus and with Trust, Call on Him in the Day of Trouble

One of my favorite Gospel stories is about a storm (Mt:22-32). We are told that Jesus instructed his disciples to go ahead of him to the town of Gennesaret in their boat. Jesus was still on the mountain as evening came. His disciples, on the other hand, were in trouble.

As the disciples made for their destination, a raging storm came upon the sea. Their boat "was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them."



coming toward them, walking on the waves. In their terror, they cried out, "It is a ghost!" But then they heard a familiar voice: "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

The Apostle Peter, said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus simply replied: "Come." So Peter got out of the boat. He was walking on the water toward Jesus. But then he looked away. The wind got his attention, all consuming. And he began to sink. Panicked, he cried, "Lord, save me!" Immediately, Jesus grabbed hold of Peter and said, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Then they got back into the boat and the storm was gone. In our storm, Jesus asks us the same question: "Why do you doubt?"

This terrible COVID-19 pandemic is like a massive storm. We are afraid and worried about our future. Although we might feel forsaken, we are not. The Gospel story is a comfort to me as it reminds me that I can trust God in the storms of my life. Jesus watches us in our storms.

Jesus was watching his disciples with great interest. The disciples may have lost sight of Jesus, but He never lost sight of them. They did not recognize Jesus because they weren't looking for Him.

How often is the Lord speaking, seeking to lead us, but we don't see Him because we don't expect Him. We may know Jesus, but we will never know Him deeply until He comes to us in the midst of the storms of life. It's hard to remember sometimes that Jesus calls us to keep our eyes on Him in the middle of our storms. Peter began to sink because He wasn't looking at Jesus. That's just like us. We are looking to the Lord and then look back to our circumstances as we watch the latest news report or we hear the latest rumor about COVID-19 and our hearts sink.

We all know the feeling of the downward spiral of fear, anxiety and worry. We "start to sink" when we forget God's promises to us. We forget that He is in control of our lives. Jesus will get us through this storm called the coronavirus. But we have to keep our eyes on Him.



Remember: when we are sinking, we need to call out to Jesus. When Peter started sinking, he shouted, "Lord, save me!"

Scripture reminds us that prayer calmed storms, healed the sick, and raised the dead. And the Lord gives us this promise in the words of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah: "Call to me," he says, "and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Like a storm, COVID-19 has a beginning, middle and end. Perhaps we are somewhere in the beginning or approaching the middle. But the storm will pass, and don't forget, Jesus is with us in it.

Sister Elizabeth Mathai

One Among Many

The Benedictine Sisters of Florida pray that you who receive this Tide Newsletter feel some sense of comfort and peace. We have heard from so many of you like this note from **Beth Kinsella** -

I can't tell you how much peace I get knowing that you all are praying for me and the others affected by this terrible virus. Honestly, I am hoping so much that it is the prayers of you who are the most faithful, the most studied and disciplined, that will help us all. I find myself so anxious and fearful.

Even after working in an inpatient hospice and in hospitals for decades as a respiratory therapist, one of my greatest fears that upsets me the most was when a patient was put on a ventilator. This meant that there was no "goodbyes," and no way to tell loved ones you love them.

In Memoriam

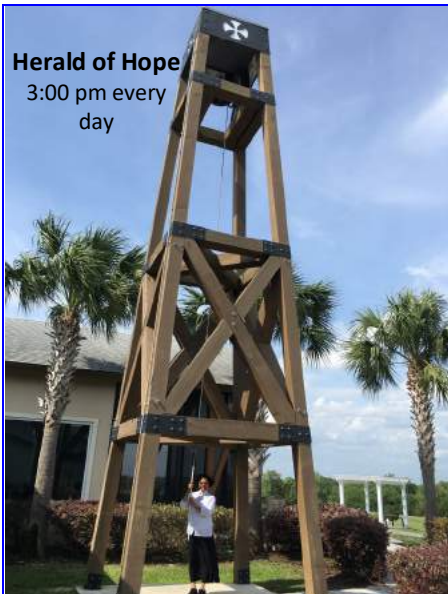
Gertrude Julia Stoaks, 90, Dec. 10, 2019, former employee

Dorothy Sanderson, December 29, 2019, former member

Nancy McCabe Counihan, February 13, 2020, Holy Name Academy Class of 1945

Please pray for them and their families.

Herald of Hope
3:00 pm every
day



S. Elizabeth ringing Angelus Bell

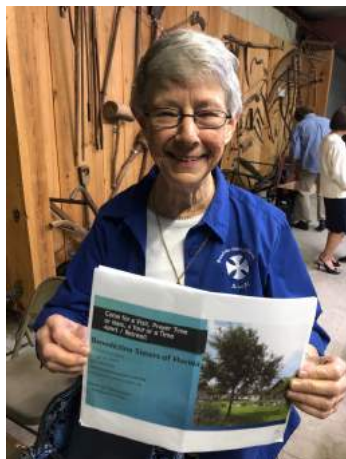
April 2nd we joined Benedictine communities in the HERALD OF HOPE practice of ringing our Angelus Bell at 3 p.m. each day of the pandemic. We stop to call to mind all those whose lives are affected by COVID-19: you, our friends as well as those who are the unemployed or lonely, isolated, especially elderly people, those with-

out food resources and all who are striving to meet that need. We remember those who are ill and all the caretakers ... there are just SO many ... we gather everyone in our prayers and present them to our holy founders, Benedict and Scholastica, along with our deceased Sisters to present to God for mercy, comfort and compassion.

We invite you to join us at 3 p.m. daily for a moment of intercession for people everywhere that they may have the courage and courtesy to practice appropriate social distancing.

Historically Speaking

Sister Roberta Bailey, OSB, Prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida was the guest speaker in January for the Dade City Historic Society. The group is a part of the Pasco County Historical Society with a mission of education and preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of Pasco County and Florida. The group meets at the Dade City Heritage Museum.



Sister's presentation included a power point with pictures dating back to the turn of the 1890's, the schools in which the Sisters taught throughout Florida, Holy Name Academy, their part in founding Saint Leo University, the Sisters' *three homes* and their ministries of today.

Thank you A&G Electrical Technologies!



We are grateful to **Andy Watkins** and **A&G Electrical Technologies** for installing electric wiring to our maintenance shed. It gives our "get it done" guy, **John Barthle** who has been with us for

over 40 years, the ability to do so much more now that he has a workshop to better maintain the monastery. John started with us as a teenager in high school working in S. Gertrude's greenhouse garden.

Focus 11



Sister Elizabeth and **Postulant Marietta** setup an educational booth at Focus 11. The event is run by the Diocese of St. Petersburg for 6th grade students every February for two days.

The students learn about Vocations. Fun activities take place throughout the day.

They are also given questions from the various religious organizations and short amounts of time allotted for them to go from booth to booth securing the answers. Sister Elizabeth and Marietta said it is as much fun for them as for the students.



We are deeply grateful to all our friends, family and benefactors who support our mission. The following represents donations to the Benedictine Sisters of Florida during Calendar Year 2019.

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William and Christine Windler
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Tracey L. Adams
Divya T. Aradhya
Marty and Teresa Hernandez
SMARTS (St. Mark's Active Retired Trend Setters)
Marlene Storch ('52) Sumner



Tributes

In Honor of ~

S. Roberta Bailey, OSB

S. Roberta and all the Sisters

*Bill Bailey
Stella Barthle
Lee Gilbert Brown
Carl and Marie D'Angelo
John Dunleavy*

*For Family
For My Parents
S. Mary David Hydro, OSB*

*Mary and John Johnson
Jeanette B. Kuchar*

*S. Helen Lange, OSB
S. Jerome Levey
Josephine Maddalena*

*Margaret Randall
Rocky Milliman
Barbara Molloy*

*U.S. Veterans
Laura Montiel Urban
S. Dianne Wansley, OSB
Angus and Judy Williams
Stella Vorek*

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Thomas and Jean Weightman
Bernd, Holly and Sophia Sokolowski
John and Phyllis Rearden
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Esther Montes de Oca
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