

The Story of the Butterfly

**A man found a cocoon of a butterfly.
One day a small opening appeared.
He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours
as it struggled to squeeze its body
through the tiny hole.
Then it stopped, as if it couldn't go further.**

**So the man decided to help the butterfly.
He took a pair of scissors and
snipped off the remaining bits of cocoon.
The butterfly emerged easily but
it had a swollen body and shriveled wings.**

**The man continued to watch it,
expecting that any minute the wings would enlarge
and expand enough to support the body.
Neither happened
In fact the butterfly spent the rest of its life
crawling around.
It was never able to fly.**

**What the man in his kindness
and haste did not understand:
The restricting cocoon and the struggle
required by the butterfly to get through the opening
was a way of forcing the fluid from the body
into the wings so that it would be ready
for flight once that was achieved.**

**Sometimes struggles are exactly
what we need in our lives.
Going through life with no obstacles would cripple us.
We will not be as strong as we could have been
and we would never fly.**

Author unknown



The Benedictine Tide

Benedictine Sisters of Florida
Touching Lives through Prayer and Service

Spring 2021

Trusting in God's Goodness

Father Alejandro Lopez, OFM Conv. was ordained in 2003 and belongs to the Order of the Chicago-based Province of St. Bonaventure Conventual Franciscans. He has been the pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary in Sydney, Australia since 2015. (Sister Roberta receives Father Al's weekly homilies forwarded to her by his friend Adrienne Cordon who lives nearby our monastery.)

Many have asked, "Father, what do *you* make of Covid?" They, of course, are wanting *me* to confirm *their* thoughts that Covid's some kind of *divine retribution* for our *sinful* society. Allow me to repeat myself from a *previous* homily:

If parents treated children as we imagine God treated us, they'd be arrested! We forget our Scriptures or simply don't know them.

When the disciples asked Jesus about a man being "born blind," whether it was caused by his sins or his parents', swiftly Jesus rejected their reasoning. Declaring "It's so that the glory of God may be revealed!" (See John 9:3)

Too often we see *as poorly as the disciples!* Like them, we're too proud. Making stupid, easy equations:

If we're good...God will bless us.

If we're bad...God will punish us.

But God refuses the restraints of our immaturity and lack of imagination.

In other words, God's world doesn't work according to our logic. To see rightly, we need a heap of humility. Approaching God (and the world) like this suffering leper. Humility helps us realize that evil like sin, sickness, suffering and death is a mystery! One which we'll never understand so let's stop pretending we do.

Part of the conflict our religion sometimes has with some in the media has to do with Catholics acting like we have all the answers. Rather than following Christ, we go off

and imagine we know better. Like the healed man today, doing the opposite of Christ's direct instructions.

Rightly, reporters see the *hypocrisy* and like any of us, hate it. And so, of course, when

some have had a chance to knock us *down* they *do*, *disgusted* by our arrogance.

Maybe God needs us *knocked down*? *Not* because God *delights* in suffering! (God *never, ever* *delights* in suffering.) But maybe *WE need* struggles to humble us. To help us see how much we *need God*...and *each other*... *even the critics!*

Maybe *nothing but humility* will bring us to our knees to pray properly: "If you want to, Lord..."

Today we try to pray like this poor leper. Trusting in God's goodness, not our own. A goodness we experience and receive at every Eucharist.



Jesus' Resurrection Guides Us Into the Newness of Life

Sister Elizabeth Mathai

As the Apostle Paul put it, "Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father so we too might walk in the newness of life." (Romans 6:4)

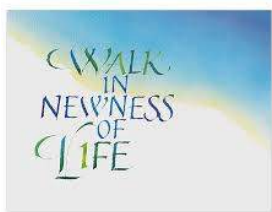
During this Holy Season, we remember that Christ identified with us and suffered on our behalf, but also that death could not contain him and that we who are in Christ are filled with the same power that raised Christ from the dead.

Jesus' resurrection changed the cross from a tragedy into triumph and it has led in a new age of the Holy Spirit's activity and power in saving and transforming our lives.

Be thankful for the struggles you go through. They make you stronger, wiser & humble. Don't let them break you. Let them make you.

The lives of Christians today demonstrate that the resurrection is still changing people. It changes fear into love, despair into hope and sufferings into joy. The resurrection changes people from being spiritually dead to being alive in God.

Jesus' Resurrection brought to us the message of forgiveness, love, and new life. It is the basis for all our future hopes and the source of power in our daily lives here and now. It gives us courage in the midst of persecution, comfort in the midst of trials, and hope in the midst of this world's darkness.



Jesus shows us through His Resurrection that life is stronger than death, that hope is stronger than despair, that love is stronger than hate and that nothing is impossible with God. Not only does Jesus conquer death, but also He reveals to us, a pattern for our own lives. He is showing

us that we can always hope that suffering is not the last word, and that God always can bring new life out of what seems to be a dead situation. Sometimes we may feel a sense of despair that nothing can ever change in our lives because of our lack of trust and hope in God's love, forgiveness and mercy. So one way to live out the Resurrection in our life journey is first to believe in Jesus's resurrection which gives us hope that new life is possible for all who put trust and hope in the Risen Christ.

May God give us the grace to faithfully follow Christ in his death and Resurrection, and to walk in the Newness of Life.

The Importance of the Monarch

Sister Miriam Cosgrove

God's beautiful monarch butterfly weighing only one gram is a barometer of our earth's environment with fossil evidence showing us that butterflies have existed on earth for about 50 million years. Is all this insignificant? Hardly. There is a drastic disappearance of countless species of insects, amphibians, many, many forms of living creatures both animal and plant life and the rise in endangered and extinct life.

You may wonder why. Look at definitions:

- **Sustain** (se stan') to undergo (injury, loss, etc.) without yielding.
- **Sustain** - to support, hold, or bear up from below

Key to the survival of any species is balance of their essential elements of food, water, shelter and diversity. Great irreversible harm is being done by the irreverent use of land when plants ingest poisonous toxins, glyphosates and then yield to death.



This fact was made clear long ago when my voracious eating monarch caterpillars were low on milkweed--their host plant, only food source, and only plant on which the eggs are deposited by the female monarch butterfly. After a purchase at a local garden center of milkweed plants, every caterpillar shriveled and died within days. Returning to the store with caterpillar remains, the clerk replied that they are not required to identify what spray is used on their plants. Sad. Their four stages of development—egg, caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly were



aborted. To date, the monarch population has greatly diminished falling below the predicted extinction threshold. Their population failed to rebound in 2019. If these tiny creatures are impacted by environmental threats, how many other species—frogs, bees, birds, and animals including humans are also in danger in similar ways?

It seems amazing that a caterpillar which appears so different in appearance from a butterfly is actually one and the same life form. The caterpillar is "all stomach" it is said, and when fully satiated, will change appearance into a glimmering green chrysalis trimmed with golden dots, a 9-day wait when developmental transformation occurs. Its new life is forming. Then it will become a "sun being," emerge free from its capsule to gently glide over the land and begin a journey. You know that it can sustain itself on a 12,000-mile migration, the longest of any insect. The scales on its wings act as solar panels collecting the sun's warmth and energy to get their wings moving in its perfect body.

Just when the caterpillar thought life was over, she became a butterfly .
(Con't Page 4)

The Importance of Monarchs (Con't.)

Why would anyone ignore such beauty? What to do? It's simple for individuals who own their land and have control over its use. Gardening for butterflies focuses on selecting two kinds of plants: nectar and larval (or host). You will encourage the monarch



population in your garden by always having a generous supply of pesticide-free host food for the caterpillars and nectar flowering plants purchased from native nurseries. Larval plants are those upon which

female monarchs lay their eggs and caterpillars feed. At the north end of the monastery is the butterfly garden in a sunny area planted over six years ago having scarlet milkweed, sweet almond bushes, and nectar-rich flowers. Be wise. Ban toxic synthetic fertilizers and pesticides which kill butterflies and many beneficial creatures near your garden. A healthy garden invites natural predators like ladybugs and

dragonflies. Protect the water and soil.

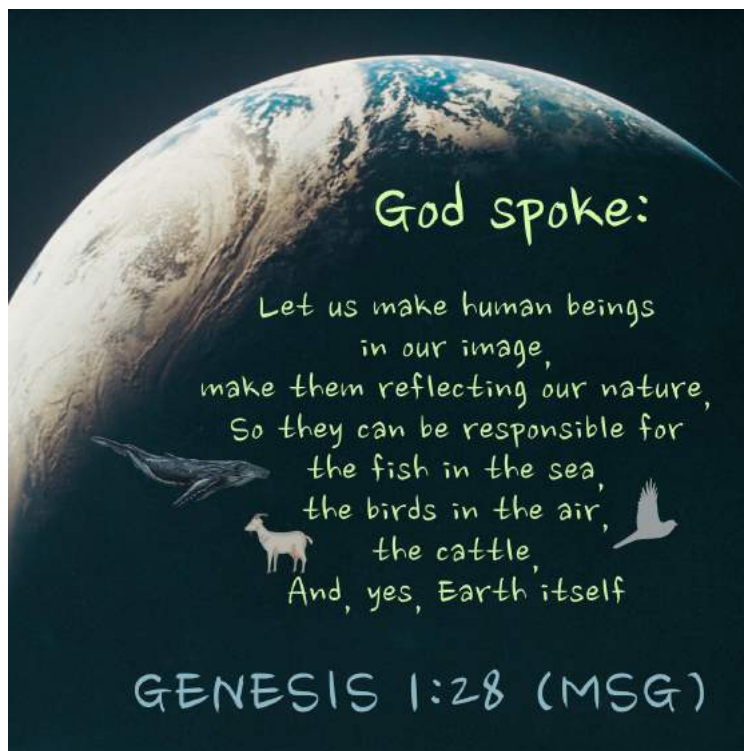
Are we fully mindful of the importance of working to sustain all living things and our environment? When our life is over, will we be judged on our stewardship of the earth and its resources to preserve the planet for future generations? Wendell Berry said, "The care of the earth is our most ancient... most worthy ...pleasing responsibility." To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope." Every one of us can make a difference when we love and care for all of Creation.

Sister Miriam Cosgrove

*Cocoon hanging from
limb of tree—inactive,
still
growth happening yet
unseen renovation—me
in hammock reading.*

Sister Mary David

Earth Day—Everyday!



Earth Pledge

Used by the
Benedictine Sisters of Erie, PA
(Inner City Neighborhood Art House)

I pledge allegiance to the earth
and its sacred parts
its water, land and living things
and all its human hearts.

I pledge allegiance to all life
and promise I shall care
to cherish all its gifts
with people everywhere.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 21 Kathleen Daye received as postulant
March 22 2021 Celebration of the Solemnity of St. Benedict
March 28 Palm Sunday
April 1 Holy Thursday

April 2 Good Friday
April 4 Easter Sunday
May 9 Mother's Day
June 20 Father's Day



Celebrating 132 Years of Service

Have you ever really given thought about the magnitude of giving that a woman of God vows. Her entire life is committed to our Lord and Savior and bringing people to His Kingdom. It is difficult to imagine what faith and love such a life exemplifies. They are gifts to all of us. Their dedication could never be measured except by God.

The Benedictine Sisters of Florida are such women living their lives in faithful service to God and His people. **February 28, 2021 was their 132nd anniversary** of commitment to the message of Jesus - peace, love, forgiveness, renewal and giving. The five founding Sisters of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida came in 1889 from Pennsylvania to San Antonio, Florida to answer the call to educate the children of poor German immigrants. Touching lives through their prayers and service, they and the Sisters who followed have brought light, love and hope to countless students whom they have taught and to a multitude of individuals in need of guidance and new life. To this very day, their role in the Church has never faltered.

In remembering the strong shoulders upon whom today's Sisters stand, they also celebrated in praise and prayer the **Feast Day of Saint Scholastica, February 10, 2021**. You may recall, she is the twin sister of Saint Benedict and the patron saint of Benedictine nuns. Born in Norcia, Italy on March 2, 480 AD into a wealthy family, she rejected the chaotic and bankrupt life of her times. Saint Scholastica chose instead to establish a religious community only a few miles from Saint Benedict's religious community. Like her brother, Saint Scholastica walked with God throughout her life.

On the 125th anniversary of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, **Prioress Sister Roberta Bailey** gave a blessing stating that "Jesus Christ, God, is, was and will continue always to be our great 'overseer' and 'manager.'" We are confident that our focus on monastic prayer, on vital community within our monastery and in our workplaces, and on ministries that serve with purpose and justice – all this will continue to find us contributing our part in strengthening the civic culture of our time and locale and serving our church with beautiful liturgies, prayerful support and commitment to being life-long learners."

Faith Pridmore, CFRE



Like the hundreds
of those who
went before them,
the Benedictine Sisters of
Florida pray daily
for you and the world that
peace and unity
prevail.





God is Good!

With patience and humility, we were blessed with the visit from a nurse and her assistant giving us our second Covid inoculations! The first shots were a breeze for all the Sisters and the second shots gave some of us mild flu-type symptoms. We are all grateful and pray that the entire world is inoculated very, very soon!



Sister Mary Romana



Sister Miriam

In Memorium

Mary Beaumont Schrader, HNA '49

Dec. 5, 2020

Barbara Heinrich Mader, HNA '62,

Feb. 13, 2021

Teresa Hernandez

She walks into a room and you immediately know this is a woman of energy, spirit and resolve. Teresa Hernandez relationship with the Benedictine Sisters of Florida began twelve years ago. She had joined the St. Mark the Evangelist Columbiettes group wanting to give back.



Serving as the contact person of the group, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida became one of the beneficiaries of this incredible group of creative "doers!"

Born in Battle Creek, Michigan to **Luigi and Josephine Maddalena**, Teresa is their middle child with a younger sister, **Deanna** and older brother, **Louis**. Her parents were committed to providing a Catholic education for their children. Each of them attended St. Philips Catholic School for twelve years and Teresa gratefully acknowledges she "received a solid education." She attended community college for two years and graduated from Western Michigan University with a major in Business Administration/Marketing.

It was a career move that brought Teresa to Florida. Six years after the move she married **Martin Hernandez** and they were blessed with a daughter, Elizabeth. "Our Elizabeth is a joy and always respectful of others... a kind soul."

Though working in a high-profile job in sales for the Kellogg organization, Teresa made her volunteer service a priority. The connection she helped develop with the Columbiettes and the Sisters has never lacked a focus on activities of fun, laughter and creativity. The energy and resolve she exhibits gathering Columbiette members for luncheons and outings for the Benedictine Sisters seems limitless. Some of their past activities include:

- Helping paint guest rooms
- Assisting with move from old to new monastery
- Attending a baseball game and enjoying the Rays honoring the Sisters
- Dedicated luncheons twice a year
- Special guests at one of the luncheons featuring photos with Pope Francis - a cardboard standee!
- Games and Trivia and providing special gifts for the Sisters
- Making Christmas ornaments and chocolates
- Having the Sisters as our guests at our St. Mark's Annual Tea Parties

- Many of us supporting/attending their fundraising events
- Hosting 'Christmas in July events' wherein we asked the Sisters for their wish list. Humble as they always are, we went into action and surprised them with everything on their lists and MORE!

Teresa's belief system is founded on, as she says, "The more you give, the more you get. I love the Sisters and would do anything for them." Needless to say, the Sisters' lives have been greatly enriched by Teresa's spirit of love and giving.

Teresa retired in October, 2020 after 45 great years with Kellogg Sales. She moved to Nashville ten days later to care for her 8-month old grandson, Miles Vincent Watkins, so his parents would not have to put him in child care during COVID. "I am enjoying my new role and will move back to Tampa in January, 2022." Those who know Teresa are happy she will eventually return!!!



"My life has become more full since beginning my friendship with the Sisters. I have been more accountable about giving to others and have great respect for the way the Sisters live lives of love. They love God, other people, the church and life. The Benedictine Sisters of Florida have given their lives to others and are a good example for all of us to follow.

Because of the Sisters' heartfelt appreciation of everything done for them, once I am back in Tampa, my intention is to continue to do whatever I can in support of their needs. It is important everyone supports the Sisters as they have served God and others their entire lives. Now it is important we serve them. We have had so many wonderful experiences with the Sisters - fun and caring people. We want to be with them!"

Connecting with YOU - our Friends and Supporters

Please update your email and/or phone number as we look forward to connecting with you from time-to-time, checking-in on how you're doing and thanking you! When calling recently, many of them have changed or we have them incorrectly in our records.

Use the enclosed return envelope!



Giving Tuesday, December 1, 2020, was a tidal wave of giving. Those who donated to thousands of charities across the country did so because they believe in the power of generosity to transform lives. Through a year of strife, inequity, grief and pain, astonishing efforts were made to help and heal others.

Ordinary people came together and made a huge impact. A record \$2.4 billion was raised on that date representing a 29 percent increase over **Giving Tuesday** 2019! There was an increase in donors from 1,700 in 2019 to 2,600 in 2020 or 49 percent.

Giving Tuesday continues to grow and its value to the non-profit sector in assisting the fulfillment of missions is incalculable.

The Benedictine Sisters of Florida organization is no different. As we approached the end of the year 2020, it was obvious we were far from realizing our goal of \$200,000...monies for our life of prayer and ministries. But our dear friends, families and supporters made it happen! Between **Giving Tuesday** and year-end giving we are grateful to report generosity totaling \$296,328.59.

We were able to do much needed monastery repairs, keep our staff employed and instead of taking from our savings to make ends meet, we were able to save some of the funds for our retirement.

A very special thanks to everyone who answered our call for help. There were several of you who gave above and beyond—John Picciano, Patricia Becker, Marty and Teresa Hernandez, the Sokolowski Family, the Herrmann Foundation, and those of you who raised the amount of your past donations. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Our Summer Tide will celebrate all who gave in 2020. We are inspired by the trust you place in us especially given this unprecedented year everyone has had to endure.

Hopefully, you are given inspiration and hope by the love and care-giving that continues to be exhibited for all of humanity.



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CORPORATE COMMITMENT

In an effort to address contemporary local needs, we, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, commit ourselves and our resources to respond with the compassion of Christ to the hungers of the People of God.

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*Have a blessed
Easter!*

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

--John 11:25-26

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