

*Tuesday March 24, 2020*

Memory has a way of playing tricks on us. We think we remember something as it happened but our memories are selective and even become obscured. We are more likely to remember happy times than sad, and even seemingly insignificant events in the larger scheme of things take on importance as we selectively remember.

We reach back in our minds to past times when we faced serious health issues, such as the SARs and H1N1 flu and wonder if our memories will give us some guidance for the current pandemic. Most of us struggle to remember what it felt like then but cannot.

When that last person witness to an event dies, memory becomes history. We have heard about the flu epidemic of 1918 when at least 675,000 persons in the United States died. At that time we only had a few more than 103 million persons, but we tell ourselves that medical care is better now, and it certainly is.

But even with that knowledge, we still fear what we do not know and so we live in a state of suspended animation. During this time, we need to listen to the doctors and not politicians who like Dr. Pangloss in *Candide* ignored the reality around him.

### *Prayer for the Day*

Holy and righteous God, although we have good intentions

We have poor follow through;

We want to live in the light and yet live in the shadows

Where less is demanded of us.

We desire to identify with the poor and dispossessed

But sometimes they seem a threat to our advantages.

Forgive us and restore us to single minded devotion

So we may follow the model of our lives,

Even Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

## Thoughts for the Day

When I say it's you I like, I'm talking about that part of you that knows that life is far more than anything you can ever see or hear or touch. That deep part of you that allows you to stand for those things without which humankind cannot survive. Love that conquers hate, peace that rises triumphant over war, and justice that proves more powerful than greed.

*Fred Rogers (1928-2003)*

To be unacquainted with events which took place before our time is always to remain a child. Intelligent existence loses its meaning without the aid of history to bring recent events into direct continuity with the past.

*Marco Tulio Cicero (106-43 BC)*

## Monday March 23, 2020

"I'm definitely going to get it. We all are. I'm just waiting." These are the words of Judith Persichilli, our Health Commissioner for the State of New Jersey. She hopes it will be mild, but in a matter-of-fact way, she believes she will be infected like so many of us here in our communities.

Facing the inevitability of an illness as serious as COVID-19 is frightening, to be sure. We are all told to keep our social distance, and the words are not a joke.

Although we may get the illness individually, we respond as a community and society. At this time, we need to remember that we are all part of a community even as we fear an illness that has the potential of being deadly to those we know and love and to the people we do not know.

## Prayer for the Day

Life giving Creator, who flows into our lives as does water from a spring,

We come, seeking guidance, seeking hope, seeking life.

Bring us into the center of your life, the center of your being

So we may more fully understand the meaning of your gift of life to us.  
Break open the doors that constrain us and enlarge our vision,  
Enabling us to love more fully as we are loved,  
In the name of the One who brought us a new meaning of love,  
Even Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Thoughts for the Day

We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are.  
Anaïs Nin, writer (1903-1977)

The things that we love tell us who we are.  
Thomas Aquinas, theologian (1225-1274)

Empathy is not simply a matter of trying to imagine what others are going through,  
but having the will to muster enough courage to do something about it. In a way,  
empathy is predicated upon hope.  
Cornel West, American social critic

Fourth Sunday in Lent  
March 22, 2020  
Rev. Dr. Joyce Antila Phipps

We are all going through more than some tough times: businesses are shuttered,  
people are afraid of even shouting a “hello” to someone from across the street, and  
we are unsure of what will come next.

It's far easier to talk about moving beyond fear than it is to *actually move beyond fear*. Even when we cannot hold even the people we know and love in our arms, we must continue to hold them in our hearts. And we must tell them that we hold them in our hearts whether by phone or by email.

In some ways we are like the Christians hiding in the catacombs trusting yet fearful  
and fearful yet trusting that Easter will come if only in our hearts.

### Prayer for the Day: March 22

When the winds rage, let us not tremble with fear;  
When the seas roar, let us not cover our ears in denial.  
Uncertain in the face of change about us,  
We find strength in your open arms and boundless love.  
May we become your vision of justice and peace,  
Testaments to your intimate love.  
In the name of him who is that testament,  
Even Christ Jesus our love. Amen.

### Prayer for the Day: March 20

Life giving Creator, who flows into our lives as does water from a spring,  
We come, seeking guidance, seeking hope, seeking life.  
Bring us into the center of your life, the center of your being  
So we may more fully understand the meaning of your gift of life to us.  
Break open the doors that constrain us and enlarge our vision,  
Enabling us to love more fully as we are loved,  
In the name of the One who brought us a new meaning of love,  
Even Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Thoughts for Today: March 20

Christianity stands or falls with its revolutionary protest against violence, arbitrariness, and pride of power, and with its plea for the weak. Christians are doing too little to make these points clear. . . . Christians should give more offense, shock the world far more than they are doing now.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906--1945)*

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

*Martin Luther King (1929-1968)*

*Third Sunday in Lent*  
*Thoughts for Today: March 15*

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak.  
Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.  
*Winston Churchill (1874-1965)*

Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.  
*Corrie Ten Boom (1892-1983)*

Most of us know the name Winston Churchill but not many know of Corrie Ten Boom, a Dutch woman who with her family helped to hide Jews from the Nazis during World War II. In this time of deep concern, let us remember the lessons of our faith and treat others with simple human decency.

*Prayer for Today: March 15*

Confronted by evils we do not understand,  
We seek retribution rather than reconciliation;  
Frustrated and because the world no longer reflects our values,  
We seek the stability of an imagined past.  
Help us to have new insights so we may work for the good  
And become instruments of your peace,  
As was the One who lived for others,  
Even Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen